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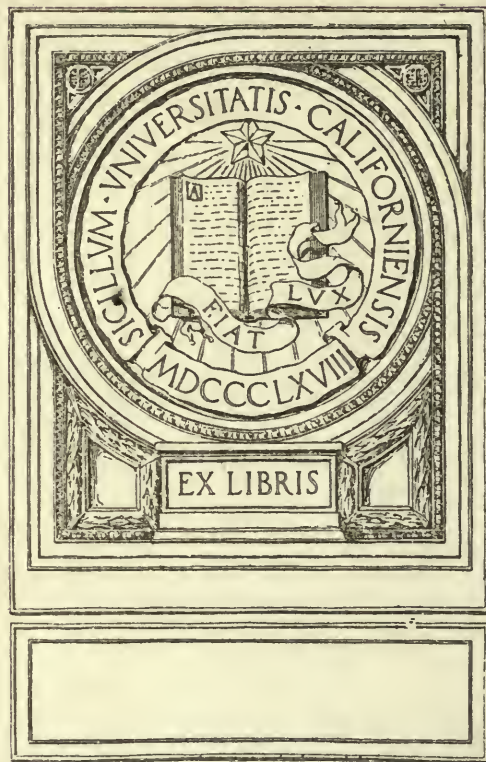


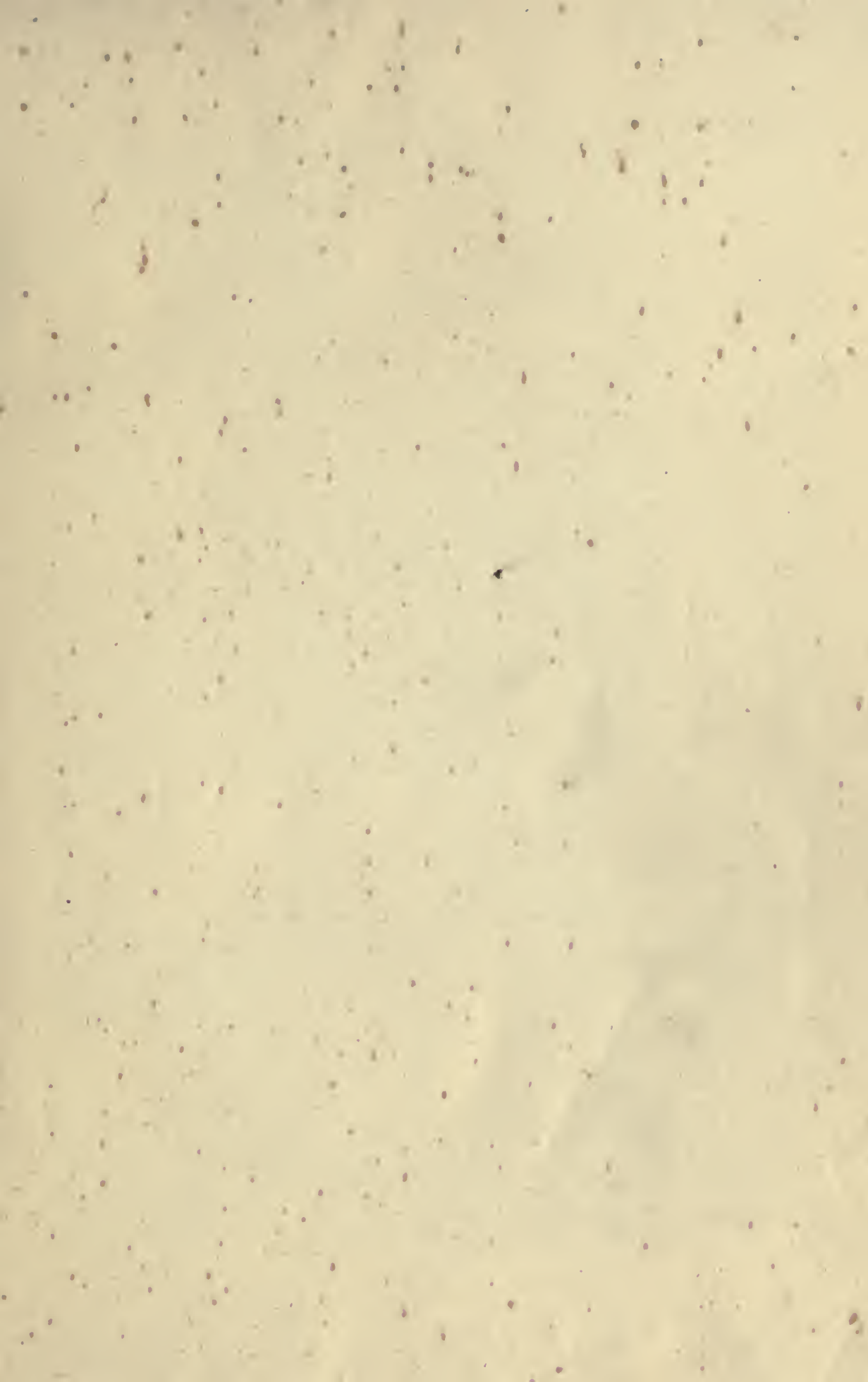
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# GREEK PICTURES



J. P. MAHAFY, MA. D.D.







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GREEK NATIONAL DANCE.



UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

# GREEK PICTURES

Drawn with Pen and Pencil

BY

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LONDON

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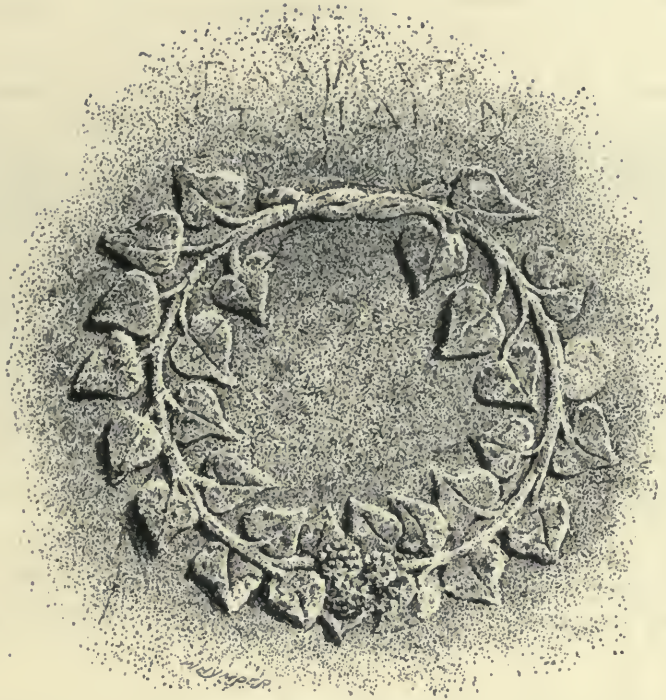
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THE VICTOR'S CROWN.

## PREFACE.

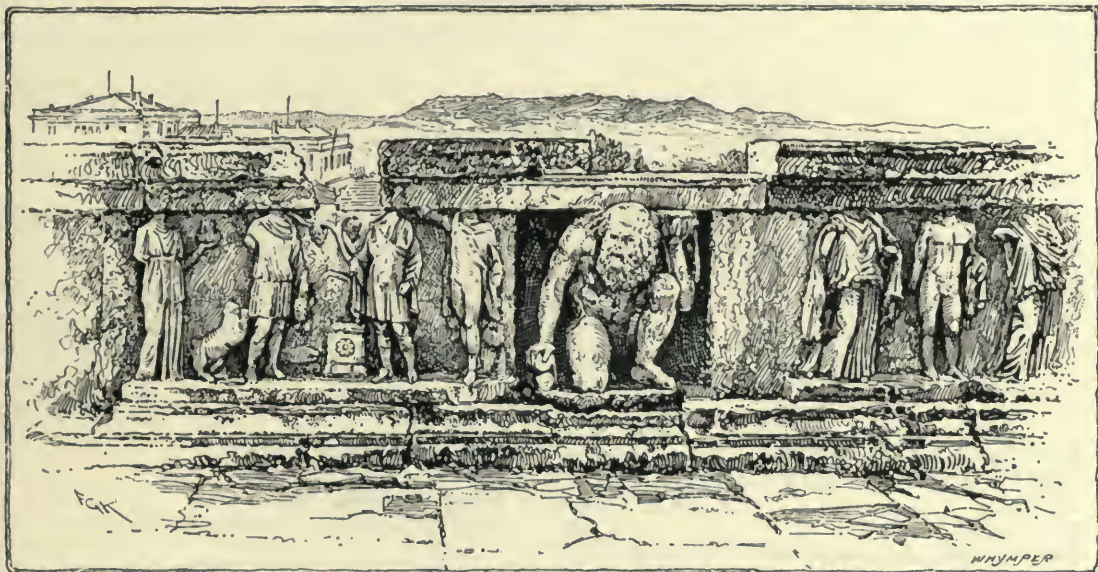
THIS volume has been written at the request of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, the publishers of the 'Pen and Pencil' series of illustrated books of travel. It is subject to the conditions applied to all the volumes; that is, it draws its pictures from all parts of Greece, and seeks to set forth latest and most accurate information in an interesting manner, without going deeply into those matters which can interest only the student and the specialist.

It has not been an easy task to secure good engravings for the book. There are a large number of good photographs and sketches in existence of famous temples, works of art, and antiquities; but the terror of the Greek brigand seems to have hitherto prevented the artist and the professional photographer from travelling far afield in Greece. Notwithstanding what has been done in recent years by the Hellenic Society, and by such amateurs as the late Mr. Macmillan, the Rev. W. Covington and others, there is much yet to be done in the way of making the fine scenery of

Thessaly, Laconia, or Arcadia as familiar by means of sketches and photographs as Norway, or Russia, or Spain.

Special thanks have to be given to Mr. G. A. Macmillan for permission to use the photographs taken by his brother, the late Mr. Malcolm Macmillan, and Mr. Louis Dyer, from which the engravings are taken on pages 5, 167, 179, and 192; to the Rev. W. Covington for those on pages 7 and 153, and to Messrs. T. Cook and Sons for the use of the engravings on pages 216, 220, and 221.

It is to be hoped that the rapidly improving facilities for travel in Greece, and the increased safety for travellers and tranquillity of the country, will induce much larger numbers to go and study the battlefields of Marathon and Mantinea, the sites of Olympia and Sparta, the beauties of the Vale of Tempe and the Gulf of Nauplia, and experience to the full the fascination of looking upon the scenes once familiar to Alcibiades, Socrates, Plato, and Euripides.



PART OF THE FRIEZE OF THE THEATRE OF DIONYSUS, ATHENS.

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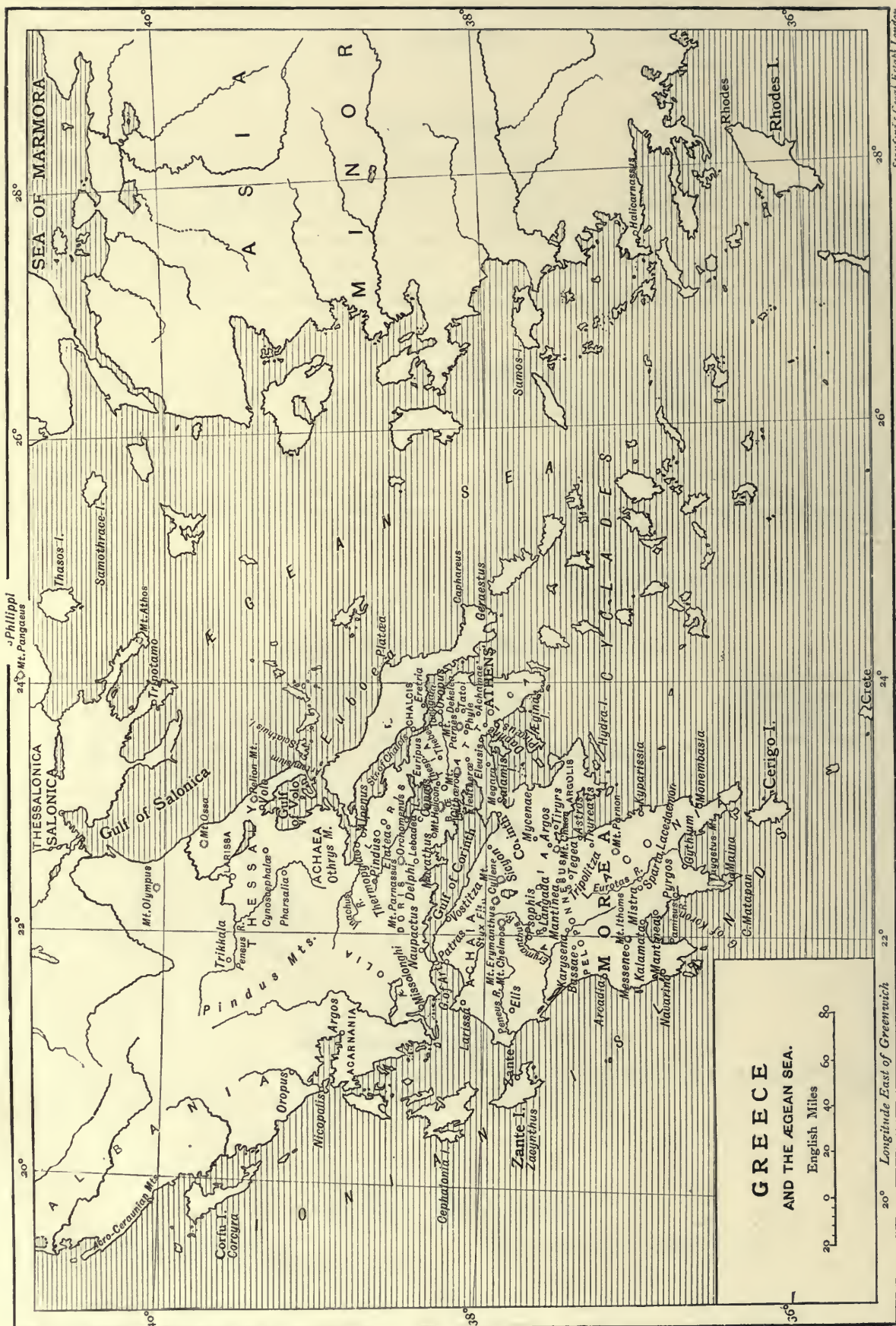
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JANNINA, CAPITAL OF EPIRUS: ONE OF THE PLACES CEDED TO GREECE BY THE BERLIN TREATY.





EQUESTRIAN FIGURE FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

PERHAPS the first reflection of the ordinary man, who looks at the map of Greece, and sees how tiny a fraction it occupies of the map of Europe, is to wonder how so small a place should have attained such great and lasting importance in the minds of men. How can it compare for one moment with those larger peninsulas which hold many millions more of men—how with those large kingdoms which are now naturally the leading powers of the civilised world? A little more thought will soon get rid of this difficulty as any peculiar obstacle to the importance of Greece, for all history tells us that real greatness, and real importance (beyond supplying regiments), does not depend on size, but on other qualities. Even in the modern map of Europe, a visitor from another planet would not guess that the small island in the north-west called England was more important and more powerful than any area of the same size in the better climates and more fruitful soil of Southern Europe. And when we go back into the annals of the past, it seems almost a law that all the greatest interests of human nature are centred in some small spot, some focus of spiritual light, of intellectual energy, from which they radiate into the large tracts which have but small part in human progress.

The area of Egypt is not nearly as large as that of Ireland, and yet

for many centuries Egypt exceeded in importance all the other nations of the world put together. The plain of Mesopotamia was not larger, and yet from hence too the whole of Hither Asia was ruled and civilised. The Phœnicians swayed all the Mediterranean in their day, and here is the still more astonishing problem, reproduced long after by Venice, of a people who had little more than a town for their country swaying large districts, and ruling over millions of men.

But why delay over lesser instances, when we have in Palestine the greatest and strangest of them all? When our Lord 'was made flesh and dwelt amongst us,' His wisdom chose, not the greatest country of the world in situation, in size, in circumstances, but a small and remote country, inhabited by a people small in numbers, and isolated from other nations. It might have seemed to human wisdom a strange choice for the cradle of a new religion, intended to conquer the world. Even human wisdom can be taught, however, that the Divine selection was according to the analogy of all history. The importance of a country and its people has never depended on quantity, but on quality. The steadfast pertinacity of the Jews, their earnestness in maintaining and spreading their faith, showed clearly that to them in the first instance, and through them to larger nations, might the new faith be most fitly entrusted. Thus a small nation may have and perform a great mission, and so a small country may represent interests far vaster than were ever entrusted to the steppes of Asia or the prairies of America.

I suppose that, next to Palestine, no more signal example of the law I have been explaining can be found than in the case of Greece. Unable to cope in population or in resources with the great kingdoms of the world, often held in subjection or in partial dependence by stronger neighbours, passing at last from master to master into downright slavery beneath the Turks, this wonderful peninsula has asserted and reasserted itself time after time with indestructible energy. It has absorbed its invaders, leavened its conquerors, dominated its masters. And so there is no spot of the same area in all the world, about which so much has been thought, and written, and said.

And yet when we call Greece very small, it is by no means so small as might be inferred from a hasty look at the map. In the first place, its limits are not easily defined. Not only does it include the islands of the Levant, but, in its greater days, the coasts of Asia Minor and the 'Two Sicilies' were counted, fairly enough, as parts of Greece. For they were inhabited by the Greek people, and belonged to the same great unit known as Hellenic country. But even laying aside this once lawful extension, as taking us far beyond the limits of a volume like the present, the actual surface of Greece and its coast lines are quite out of proportion to the indications of ordinary maps. For the country is almost wholly a moun-



tainous country; the islands are mountains, or chains of mountains, standing out of the sea, so that to cross any of these narrow shreds of land, as they appear on the map, is far longer, even in miles, than to sail round it. The coast line is so broken and indented, that it exceeds by hundreds of miles the bounding line of any European kingdom. If the mountains run into the sea, the sea also runs into the mountains, so that from a yacht the traveller may visit almost any spot in Greece without spending more than one night on shore.

There is, therefore, more to see, more to be done, more variety of scene, more separation of landscape, than is at first conceivable. Each plain, the seat of old cities with their surrounding homesteads, is separated from the next, either by the sea or by chains of mountains, forming a real and lasting barrier. Bœotia is quite a new country, which you reach from Attica only by climbing mountains and crossing passes. Laconia is separated from Arcadia, Argos, Messene, by even greater obstacles. Even Corinth is severed from Megara, Megara from Eleusis, Eleusis from Athens, by barren and rugged hills, so that the traveller who passes from one to the other feels how natural it was to have in each of them a separate society and a distinct history. In Attica itself, as I have just said, Eleusis is separated by hills, and invisible from Athens, so much so that the historian tells us the people of Attica did not feel invaded so long as the Spartans ravaged that district. It was not till they crossed the Pass of Daphne and occupied Acharnæ, that the disaster came home to the Athenians. And so also old legends speak of a time when not only Eleusis, but Marathon, equally out of sight of the ultimate capital, were independent, and obeyed rulers of their own.

This it was which not only made the physical, but the political surface of Greece so various and interesting. The only modern parallel I can quote to the reader, is the occurrence of many independent cantons in Switzerland, where the several valleys are parted, as in Greece, either by sheets of water or great mountains. But whether it be severity of climate, or want of commercial outlets, or deficiency in that national genius which we are all trying to explain by natural causes, and without success, the Swiss are only like the Greeks in isolation, love of liberty, and love of mercenary service; in historic greatness, in literary fame—despite Mürten and Morgarten, despite Geneva and the Calvinists—Greece stands unchallenged and alone.

It is all the more necessary to insist upon the beauty of Greek landscape, because as yet there are very imperfect means of reproducing it to the general reader. No great painter has made that fairyland his special object; even the photographer has only penetrated its wilder parts to reproduce artistic remains, old temples, tomb reliefs; he has not turned aside—how could he?—to give even his cold travesties of the light and



colour of the hills and dales, its isles and woods. While, therefore, our pictures can give a very fair idea of the antiquities and the art treasures of the country, we are in landscape very helpless, till modern painters extend their view, and embrace upon their canvas this southern Norway, this marine Switzerland, this fairest and most fascinating of all the countries in Europe.



SALAMIS.

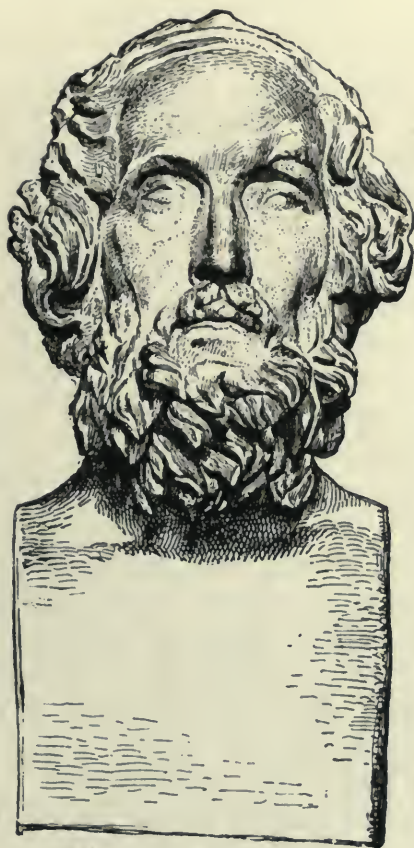
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A GREEK HARVEST HOME.





HOMER.

## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

THE day is not yet past, though I can see it passing away, when a voyage to Greece is still a serious thing, to be compassed with consideration and with advice, with consultation of guide-books and of friends, with calculations of time and of money. Even still, therefore, most travellers will hardly escape the peculiar excitement which attends a first visit to this famous land, and will count it a great day in their experience. Nearly twenty years ago, I enjoyed this intense delight, and even now the pages in which I sought to record it appear to me hardly antiquated.

‘For many hours after the coasts of Calabria had faded into the night, and even after the snowy dome of Etna was lost to view, our ship steamed through the open sea, with no land in sight; but we were told that early in the morning, at the very break of dawn, the coasts of Greece would be visible. So, while others slept, I started up at half-past three in the

morning, eager to get the earliest possible sight of the land which still occupies so large a place in our thoughts. It was a soft, grey morning; the sky was covered with light, broken clouds, the deck was wet with a passing shower, of which the last drips were still flying in the air; and before us, some ten miles away, the coasts and promontories of the Peloponnesus were reaching southward into the quiet sea. These long serrated ridges did not look lofty, in spite of their snow-clad peaks, nor did they look inhospitable, in spite of their rough outline, but were all toned in harmonious colour—a deep purple blue, with here and there, on the far Arcadian peaks, and on the ridge of Mount Taygetus, patches of pure snow. In contrast to the large sweeps of the Italian coast, its open seas, its long waves of mountain, all was here broken, and rugged, and varied. The sea was studded with rocky islands, and the land indented with deep, narrow bays.

‘I can never forget the strong and peculiar impression of that first sight of Greece; nor can I cease to wonder at the strange likeness which rose in my mind, and which made me think of the bays and rocky coasts of the west and south-west of Ireland. There was the same cloudy, showery sky, which is so common there; there was the same serrated outline of hills, the same richness in promontories, and rocky islands and land-locked bays. Nowhere have I seen a like purple colour, except in the wilds of Kerry and Connemara; and though the general height of the Greek mountains, as the snow in May testified, was far greater than that of the Irish hills, yet on that morning, and in that light, they looked modest and homely, not displaying their grandeur, or commanding awe and wonder, but rather attracting the sight by their wonderful grace, and by their variety and richness of outline and colour.’<sup>1</sup>

This is the southern approach by sea—perhaps, after all, the least interesting. For now most travellers will prefer to go by Corfu and through the Ionian islands to Patras, from whence a train—yes, a puffing engine with square carriages—brings them by Sicyon, Corinth, Megara, Eleusis, to the capital. Most of the essential features of Greek landscape disclose themselves to the wondering eye on this exquisite journey. At dawn of day you come in sight of the Acro-Ceraunian Mountains, and that wild country, now Albania, which of old nursed Pyrrhus, the scourge of Rome; Olympias, the Titanic mother of Alexander the Great; and in after days a lesser Alexander, Scanderbeg, who was, nevertheless, a great figure in the history of his day; and as the Dorians of old came down from their mountains, and refreshed Southern Greece with their strong youth and their warlike virtues, so, in the Middle Ages, these Albanian mountaineers have brought both warlike spirit, bright costume, and beauty of person, to refresh the Hellenic race. There are still, even in Attica, districts where Albanian is the common language; there are Albanian names famous in Greek annals,

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 3-5.



especially in the great War of Independence (1821-31), and even among the sailors of Hydra, so famed for their commercial enterprise and their deeds of war, the chief families were Albanian in origin. The Greeks, who possess with the other Ionian islands, Corfu, since the cession, by Mr. Gladstone's influence, feel very sore that the mainland opposite their principal island, the rugged nurse of the splendid youths one sees buying weapons and ammunition in the market of Corfu, should still belong to the Turks. But every effort to possess themselves of Joánnina by diplomacy failed against the tough resistance of the Porte. At the present moment (1889), the Greeks have a very strong argument to urge in favour of their claims. While every spot in the kingdom of Greece is perfectly safe for strangers, and can be visited without escort or alarm, this very province of Joánnina—the ancient Epirus—is so insecure that neither the Turkish nor the English Government will sanction any attempt to travel through it. There could be no fairer and more characteristic way of entering Greece, now that railways are threatening to carry people there by sleeping-cars and night mails, than to land from Corfu, and ride through Joánnina over the passes of Mount Pindus to Meteora in Thessaly, and so to Volo. This excursion of four days from the Adriatic to the Levant would carry the traveller through splendid mountain passes, clothed with forest or with rich ever-green vegetation. He would see true and undebauched mountaineers in their homes, and would enjoy that peculiar pleasure, becoming rarer every day, of travelling in Europe his own master, unvexed by posts and their punctualities, officials and their irksome patronage.

Before I return from this Albanian digression, I will say a word about the costume which has become the national dress of the Greeks. The most characteristic feature is the *fustanella*, a white petticoat, which, like the Scottish kilt, gives its name to the whole attire. Wearing the *fustanella* in Greece is like 'wearing the kilt' in Scotland. This petticoat is, however, far more troublesome and exacting than its Highland brother. In the first place, it must be as tight as possible round the waist; and this is the reason that the king's guards at Athens, who wear it as their uniform, look so straight and well drilled. If you want a man to stand thoroughly upright, squeeze in his waist. The amount of white linen or calico is also enormous—perhaps twenty or thirty yards, plaited so densely that the whole thing stands out from the wearer after the manner of a ballet-dancer's attire. At first sight this strikes the stranger as ungraceful, especially as it is coupled with a tight leg-dress, and shoes turned up at the toes, with large woollen rosettes upon them. But the gaiters or greaves are richly embroidered, and of dark rich colours; the open jacket or vest, with its hanging sleeves, is covered with rich ornament, and the broad leather belt is a study in itself, holding knives, pistols, tobacco—what not? It is in fact the only pocket, and a very capacious one, in the whole costume. The head-dress is not a fez, but a



red cap with a long blue tassel, fitted tight to the head, and generally worn rakishly on one side. The general effect of a crowd dressed in this way is very brilliant—a great deal of white, both the clean white of linen and the duller cream-white of wool. This I take to have been the general tone of an old Greek crowd as well. Then there are the brilliant patches of scarlet in the head-dresses, and many jackets of dark blue, maroon, rich brown, as

well as the beautiful embroideries upon white woollen coats, which are the most attractive of all. In wet weather, or in the winter, they carry besides a huge capote of very rough frieze, of home manufacture, which serves them as a saddle-cloth or a blanket as well as an overcoat.

The dress of the women, when they still wear a national dress, is not so striking, nor do I feel very competent to describe it. The obvious features are the display of coins—gold and silver—in the form of a broad necklace covering the throat, and so an Albanian or Phocian girl shows her fortune, and the large, loose great-coat or dressing-gown of wool, with red embroidery round the skirt, which is a shapeless garment, though of course far better than the modern horrors they adopt from the wandering traders, or the distorted echoes of European fashion. One of the curious features in this century is the admiration for national costume among all the people who have lost it, and the low esteem for it among all those who still possess it. We, who have sunk all colour and design in grey tweeds and



A MODERN GREEK IN NATIONAL DRESS.

pot-hats, take artificial opportunities of decking ourselves out in these foreign and barbarous dresses, which the natural wearers lay aside, if possible, to adopt our uniform hideousness of attire. Even the beautiful tones of Eastern carpets, which we justly prize, and for which we pay large money, are now disappearing in the East before imitations of the staring discords of modern German manufacturers. To purchase a good Greek rug at Athens twenty years ago was easy enough. Now you will not

see one in a thousand at the bazaars—you must go to some left-behind place, like Salonica or Monastir, to find these relics of unconscious good taste.

But I feel I am spending too many pages on these external features, and delaying the reader unduly on this entrance into Greece. Though Corfu (the old Corcyra) is now an essential part of the Hellenic kingdom, and a frequent summer residence of the king, there are many things in it peculiar to the history of the island, and not elsewhere to be found in these waters. It shares, of course, with Zante and the other Ionian islands, including even Cerigo (the old Cythera), the benefits derived from the English occupation—good roads, proper light-houses, and the notions of clean hotels and civilised appointments. These advantages make Corfu even now a pleasant and comfortable place for residence.

In antiquities, Corfu is curiously poor, seeing that it was a well-known Hellenic centre of wealth from old times, notorious indeed in Thucydides for its atrocities, as that great artist selected it for the gloomiest picture on his historical canvas, but of course also abounding in those treasures which, if now unearthed, would make the fortune of any Greek town. But except the circular tomb of Menecrates with its old inscription, and the famous archaic lion now preserved in the royal residence, there is hardly anything to be studied. Part of this dearth is no doubt due to the careful collections of precious things made by Lord Ockham (now Lord Lovelace), Mr. Woodhouse, and others, who lived in Corfu, and bought when buying was possible. Any one who examines the Woodhouse



A GREEK WOMAN OF MANTOUDI IN THE NATIONAL DRESS.



Collection, now incorporated, but specified, in the British Museum, will see the sense of this observation.

It is remarkable that Corfu has always held the pre-eminence among the Ionian islands, probably because it was the outpost to and from Italy. Both in climate and in fruitfulness it is not superior to Zante or Cephalonia; indeed, the former is even fairer, and contains mineral wealth peculiar to itself. On the southern slopes of Cephalonia, and at Zante, the currant grape will grow, whereas even at Corfu the winters are too cold. The lemons and oranges of Zante are imported to Corfu. Nevertheless, these southern islands have never attained to any fame, if we except the steep rock of Ithaca, which made its reputation ages ago, by the inventions of the great poet who wrote the *Odyssey*. I dare not call him Homer, lest I should be suspected of old-fashioned views, and of holding that he was also the poet of the *Iliad*. I am already going very far in the retrograde direction when I speak of him in the singular, and when I say that he *wrote* his poem. The curious thing about him is this: that though he gives rightly the general character of Ithaca, as a rocky and barren island, he seems to have no real knowledge of the place in detail. The ingenious attempts made by firm believers like Dr. Schliemann and others, to identify the sites picturesquely described in the *Odyssey*, have resulted, I think, in total failure. But, nevertheless, Ithaca, as a name, will live in story for ever, and remains a monument of the power of poetry.

But with this strange exception, and that of the Corcyrean massacres, to which I have already alluded, the statement with which I opened my *Rambles and Studies* remains true, that all the importance of Greece looks eastward, and that this Ionian or Adriatic side is the out-of-the-way, the backward, the forgotten part of the country. Let me add another curious negative testimony, which I have not before mentioned. When St. Paul came to preach the Gospel in Europe, he coasted the north and the east of the land; he preached at Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth. The western country is never mentioned. From Greece his labours extend even to Italy—but he never takes the ordinary route. He never preaches at Patræ, at Zacynthus, at Corcyra. Nor do we hear of any of his fellow-workers or followers coming or going to these parts. There were, of course, special causes for the depopulation and decay of Western Greece in the period preceding St. Paul's labours. The country had been laid waste by the Romans, and had become mere pastures or barren lands. Roman lords like Pomponius Atticus owned large tracts in Epirus. A Roman exile like Caius Antonius could lord it as he chose in Cephalonia. There was, therefore, except at Nicopolis and Patræ, no population to be compared with that of the districts visited by the apostle. But at all times and at all epochs the unimportance of Western Greece is signal and curious.



As the steamer makes her way southward, the great mountains unfold themselves, and disclose the entrance into the famous Gulf of Corinth—that long fiord which has witnessed more history and more politics than any library of books could adequately expound. To the right and to the left, as you enter this gulf, are the Alps, which have again and again been the nurses of liberty. There was a period in Greek history when all the greater states had become effete, had fallen under the power of Macedon, had sullied their great traditions, and were degraded to flattery and mendicancy in their public acts. The great historian of Greece, George Grote, when he comes to this condition of things at Athens, cites with disgust one of their fawning decrees, offering the honours of the state for a mess of pottage from a foreign king, and throws down his pen.<sup>1</sup>

But in the mountains now before us, and on either side, both north and south, the hardy mountaineers of Ætolia and Achaia, hitherto hidden from history and from fame, formed a new political life, that of Confederations, and renewed in the Greece of Polybius what the Greece of Thucydides and Xenophon had so nobly begun. Political liberty in a new form—the form copied by Switzerland and the United States of America—became again the appanage of the Hellenic race, and the Ætolian and Achæan Leagues enabled little towns and poor men to treat with kings and affect the policy of empires. When we are asked, as we sometimes are, what good there is in spending our lives over the details of ancient history, we have an answer ready, quite apart from the proper reply, that learning is a good thing in itself, and requires no support from the supposed advantages it may entail. The answer in the case of this Greece of Polybius (300–150 B.C.) which Grote thought beneath his attention, is that the great practical politicians of America, Hamilton and Madison, who laid down in their paper, the *Federalist*, the lines upon which that noble commonwealth was set up, made a distinct study of the Achæan League, and adopted from its arrangements many practical devices for the republic which was then coming into existence. To follow a successful experiment, or to avoid an acknowledged mistake, is a very different thing from trying a brand new theory.

The Ætolians never gained so high a reputation. They were undoubtedly accurate prototypes of those vigorous and turbulent clephts who contributed in this century with such vigour to the liberation of Greece, and at the same time took good care to fill their own pockets. But both were the real and sincere advocates of liberty; and whatever boldness and independence existed in the later history of Greece was very much due to these wild mountaineers, who earned gold by mercenary service, in Syria, Egypt, and

<sup>1</sup> Grote's *Greece*, conclusion of Chap. xcvi., which is the real close of the great work, though followed by a long appendix on Magna Græcia. The words are: 'When such begging missions are the deeds for which Athens both employed and recompensed her most eminent citizens, an historian accustomed to the Grecian world as described by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, feels that the life has departed from his subject, and with sadness and humiliation brings his narrative to a close.'



Carthage, and then came home to spend it at their capital Thermon, which was at one time a very museum of art and architecture. Another generation or two of successful trading in this century would have made the island of Hydra just such another settlement, fed and enriched by the labour of absentees, whose great ambition was to come home some day and display their wealth, in luxury and hospitality among their kindred. The interest of the northern coast used to centre at Naupactus, at the point where the two shores approached within two or three miles. There it was that various



A MOUNTAIN VIEW ON THE GULF OF CORINTH.

striking incidents both of war and diplomacy took place.

In our day Naupactus no longer exists; it is at Missolonghi that the greatest tragedies in the modern history of Greece took place. At Missolonghi the great poet who stirred all Europe for the cause of Hellenic liberty lay down and died, when his task of liberation was but partly accomplished. At Missolonghi the brave defenders of their households and their homes showed the indomitable heroism which, in spite of their defeat and massacre, proved to the world that Greece could not longer exist in slavery, and that there was no choice for Europe between witnessing the total extirpation of the population, or insisting upon the departure of the Turks. In this neighbourhood too, the other Philhellene to whom the Greeks owe most, nay, perhaps as much as they do to Byron, met his



death from the stray bullet of an Albanian sharpshooter. The daring deeds of Captain Abney Hastings have not received their full meed of praise in the current books upon Greece, though his friend Finlay has spoken out clearly, and told of his unselfishness, of his clear insight, of his originality in applying the newly discovered steam power to naval warfare.

But our steamer brings us to the opposite shore, and we land at Patras. For to run a railway along the northern shore of the gulf would have been an engineering feat rather than a reasonable enterprise, seeing that the southern shore is a gentle slope, from which the mountains rise gradually into Arcadia. Patras, the ancient Patræ, was once a flourishing city in the Achæan League. When the rest of Greece sank under the oppressive friendship or the crushing vengeance of the Romans, Patræ still maintained an important position as a trading port, and, moreover, here it was that the great Pompey settled a large number of the pirates whom he had swept from the Levant in his famous admiralship of the year 67 B.C. It sounds so odd to the modern reader that a settlement of pirates should be thrust upon a respectable city, and should make it flourish, that I shall take the opportunity of saying a word about this Levantine piracy, now happily and at last a matter of history only.

In early times, as the reader of Homer knows, piracy was thought rather a respectable trade. 'Are you a merchant,' somebody asks, quite politely, 'or are you making your livelihood by raiding upon the coasts?' In these early days, when Phœnicians and Greeks first ventured far away along barbarous coasts, it seemed not to matter very much whether they made five hundred per cent. in barter with the natives, or simply took away what they could find, without paying for it at all. But what strikes us as very curious, is that, even in civilised and historical days, this great immorality in condoning robbery and even murder on the highways of the sea never met with the stern reprobation it deserved. It was the real merit of those naval empires which held sway over the Levant—in the earliest days Crete, then Athens, then Rhodes—that by their vigorous police they kept the seas tolerably clear and safe for commerce. But the instant this vigilance was relaxed pirates reappeared, and *arch-pirates* are spoken of in the later days of Greek history (3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.) as a sort of naval magnates or admirals, with whom both Hellenistic kings and Roman generals treated as an independent power. There was a moment when the pirate question even became the problem of the world's peace. The exactions and violences of the Romans, the selling into slavery of vast numbers of free Greeks, the destruction of ancient maritime cities with a sailor population had thrown upon the world thousands of outcasts, in penury and want, full of bitterness and hatred against the dominant power, and ready to live by violence, and revenge themselves for their misfortunes. The great speech of Cicero in favour of the law proposed by Manilius, which made



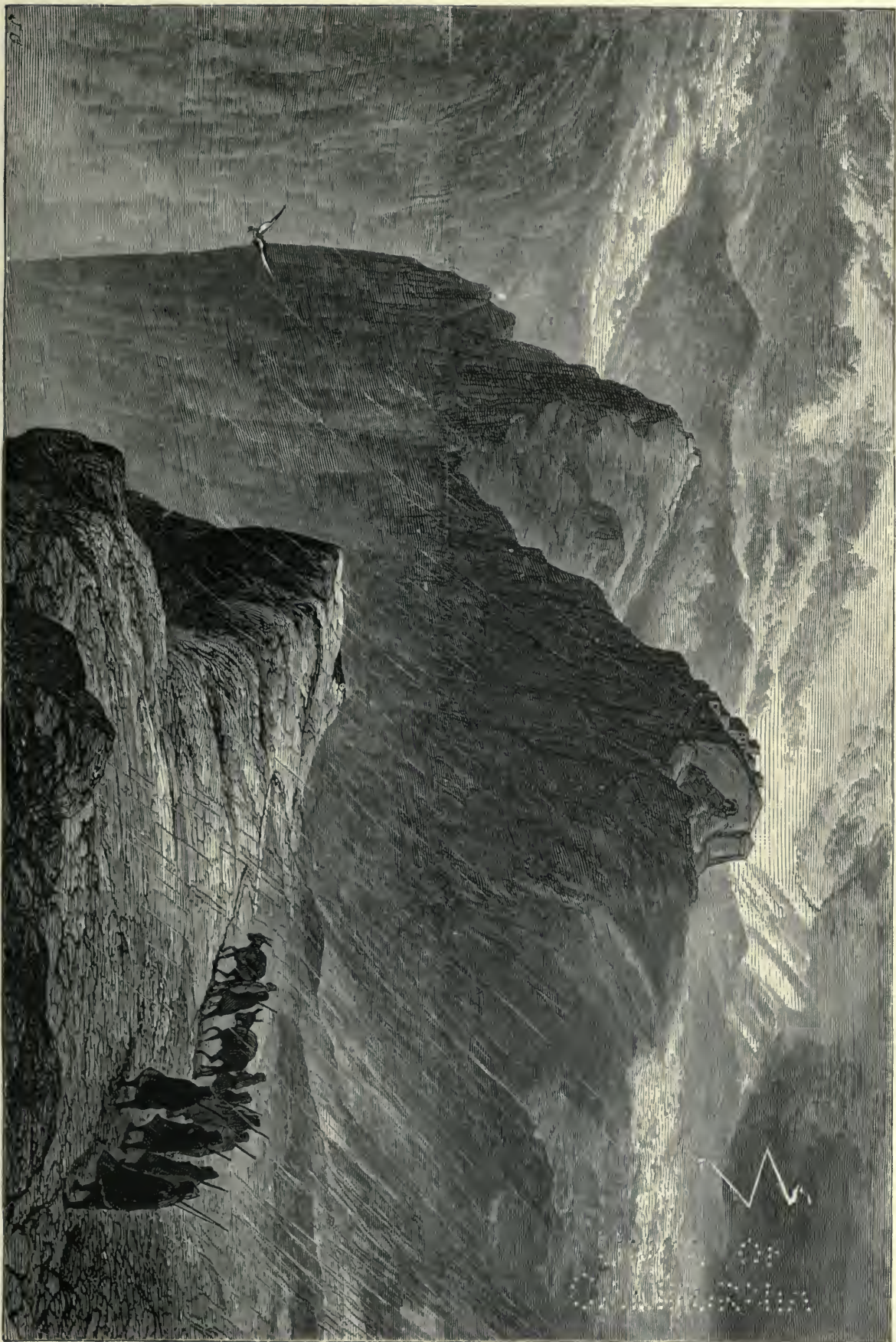
Pompey admiralissimo of all the Roman fleets and coasts, gives us such frightful details of the daring and the cruelty of these pirates, that we must consider the circumstances I have just named, to account for the dreadful disorganization of the world.

But, on the other hand, Pompey's settlement gives us a clear sign that these people were to a great extent landmen, and even landmen of former respectability turned loose upon the sea. For when he settled them at Patras and elsewhere they seem to have returned to order and respectability, which buccaneers in the mediæval sense would never have done. Virgil, in a famous passage in his *Georgics*, describes an old Cilician pirate who had taken to gardening in his new home, near Tarentum in Italy—a very mild and harmless pursuit for one who had perhaps made Roman officers walk the plank, and in any case had kidnapped and sold innocent children into hopeless slavery. All the plots of the extant Greek novels, which nobody reads nowadays, turn upon adventures with pirates. The hero or the heroine never escapes being kidnapped at some moment of their history. I will not follow the long history of violence and crime through all the Middle Ages, when Saracens, Turks, and so-called Christians, vied with each other in deeds of lawlessness, cruelty and revenge, through the coasts and islands of the Levant. Ultimately people ceased to inhabit the sea-board, on account of its insecurity; and the main reason why the coasts of Southern Italy and of Greece still wear so desolate and lonely an aspect is that the ravages of pirates and disappearance of coast population has made the sea-board in most places a veritable solitude. These things are not so old even now. It was within our own century that Lord Exmouth bombarded the corsairs of Algiers, and that Byron lived among the perils of pirates in Greece. All through Byron's poetry, the pirate is represented as a sort of wild adventurer, revenging himself for some wrong of men or circumstances, and not without noble and picturesque environments. I fear his picture of the Greek or Albanian pirates, as regards good qualities, is no truer than Cooper's pictures of the North American savages, whose falsehoods, meanness, and terrible cruelty he disguised under a guise of invented chivalry.<sup>1</sup>

What has really caused piracy to disappear from the Levant is not the increasing honesty or civilization of the people, for the brigand, or land-pirate, is still quite a usual phenomenon (beyond the kingdom of Greece), but the invention of steam, which has put into the hands of governments a perfectly effectual engine for pursuing and destroying the fastest felucca, while the expenses of building and maintaining steamers are far beyond the

<sup>1</sup> The real state of the case may be learned from Mr. Parkman's book on the Jesuit missions to these savages, when they were in no way touched by the vices of European immigration, but were still in what people imagine their pristine innocence and respectability. A more horrible picture of odious vice is hard to be found anywhere. Anything I have ever known of Greek pirates from reliable hearsay, or of Greek brigands, still so common in Levantine Turkey, corroborates my opinion that here too the influence of fiction has been to palliate odious crimes, and to cast a halo of poetry around the most degraded and disgusting of miscreants.





THE CASTLE OF SULI IN EPIRUS.





resources of any modern pirates. Certainly the nooks and corners, the safe hiding-places, and lofty look-out promontories, make this part of the world curiously well adapted for marine dishonesty. I believe the Malay Archipelago, with its very similar natural features, still maintains a reputation analogous to that of Byron's Greece in this unenviable particular.

But we must leave these antiquarian considerations, and descend to the modern Patras, still a thriving port, and now the main point of contact between Greece and the rest of Europe. For, as a railway has now been opened from Patras to Athens, all the steamers from Brindisi, Venice, Trieste, put in there, and from thence the stream of travellers proceeds by the new line to the capital. The old plan of steaming up the long fiord to Corinth is abandoned; still more the once popular route round the Morea, which, if somewhat slower, at least saved the unshipping at Lechæum, the drive in omnibuses across the isthmus, and reshipment at Cenchreæ—all done with much confusion, and with loss and damage to luggage and temper. Not that there is no longer confusion. The railway station at Patras, and that at Athens, are the most curious bear-gardens in which business ever was done. The traveller (I speak of the year of our Lord 1889) is informed that unless he is there an hour before the time, he will not get his luggage weighed and despatched. And when he comes down from the comfortable hotel—exceptionally so for Greece—to find out what it all means, he meets the whole population of the town in possession of the station. Everybody who has nothing to do gets in the way of those who have; everything is full of noise and confusion. I remember once waking up in an inn at Tripolitza (in Arcadia) with the consciousness that there were people in the room. I found a number of splendidly dressed people examining with perfectly innocent curiosity my appointments, feeling the edge of razors, hesitating over the use of tooth and nail brushes, wondering at tooth powder, &c. They had even strained the lock of a bag, to peep in and see what was inside. When I started up, and bade them be gone with no small impatience, they went out quietly, without the least sense that they were intruding. They had heard that a stranger had arrived. Probably, as they get up very early, they had waited some time to see what I was like. Then their curiosity overcame them, and they invaded my bedroom. The traveller in Greece must expect this sort of attention. He is stared at and criticised as fully as the Athenians of old criticised St. Paul or any other stranger, but without malice or ill-nature.

At last the train steams out of the station, and takes its deliberate way along the coast, through woods of fir trees, bushes of arbutus and mastic, and the many flowers which stud the earth. And here already the traveller, looking out of the window, can form an idea of the delights of real Greek travel, by which he must understand mounting a mule or pony, and making his way along woody paths, or beside the quiet sea, or up the steep sides

of a rocky defile. Every half-hour the train crosses torrents coming from the mountains, which in flood times colour the sea for some distance with the brilliant brick-red of the clay they carry with them from their banks. The peacock blue of the open sea bounds this red water with a definite line, and the contrast in the bright sun is something very startling. Shallow banks of sand also reflect their pale yellow in many places, so that the brilliancy of this gulf exceeds anything I had ever seen in sea or lake. We pass the sites of Ægion, now Vostitza, once famous as the capital or centre (politically) of the Achæan League. We pass Sicyon, the home of Aratus, the great regenerator, the mean destroyer of that League, as you can still read in Plutarch's fascinating life of the man. But these places, like so many others in Greece, once famous, have now no trace of their greatness left above ground. The day may, however, still come, when another Schliemann will unearth the records and fragments of a civilization distinguished even in Greece for refinement. Sicyon was a famous school of art. Painting and sculpture flourished there, and there was a special school of Sicyon, whose features we can still recognise in extant copies of the famous statues they produced. There is a statue known as the *Canon* statue, a model of human proportions, which was the work of the famous Polycleitus of Sicyon, and which we know from various imitations preserved in Rome and elsewhere. But we shall return in due time to Greek sculpture as a whole, and shall not interrupt our journey at this moment.

All that we have passed through hitherto may be classed under the title of 'first impressions.' The wild northern coast shows us but one inlet, the Gulf of Salona, with the little port of Itea at its mouth. This was the old highway to ascend to the oracle of Delphi on the snowy Parnassus, which we shall approach better from the Bœotian side. But now we strain our eyes to behold the great rock of Corinth, and to invade this, the first great centre of Greek life, which closes the long bay at its westernmost end.





A GREEK MUSICIAN.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CORINTH.

FROM the earliest days down to the present century, Corinth has been just missing the position of the capital of Greece. Holding the key of the Morea from the north, crowned by the almost impregnable fortress once known among the fetters of Greece, provided with two harbours, and the traffic of eastern and western seas, the centre of the Hellenic peninsula, on the high road in all directions—the wonder is that from the outset Corinth did not claim and hold the first place among the cities of Greece. And yet at no time has this been the case. In very early days, there was certainly a great Phœnician settlement there, to which we may attribute the worship of Heracles, descended from the Tyrian Melcarth, the worship of Aphrodite, the Sidonian Astarte, as well as many lesser cults which characterise the religion of this city. The worship of Aphrodite in particular was marked by that peculiar licentious side which is so shocking in the idolatry of the Phœnicians. It might almost be said of them, as it has been of the Mexican Aztecs, that cruelty and lust were the main attributes of their deities, or at least of the worship which was thought acceptable to these deities by their worshippers. We do not know Corinth till the human sacrifices, which



there as elsewhere must have stained the city's conscience, had been abolished by Greek humanity ; but the practices which disgraced the worship of Astarte survived in the service of the Corinthian Aphrodite up to the days of Pindar (500 B.C.), who addresses the female ministrants of the goddess in an ode of which, happily perhaps, but a brief fragment remains, of shocking significance.

The Phœnicians left another indelible mark on Corinth, beside its religion. They left impressed upon it that trading spirit which, apart from actual trade, makes the wealth so acquired always timid in its boldness, shortsighted in its policy, submissive in its courage, never risking all for even the highest reward, ever making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and so wiser only for their generation than the children of light. Thus Athens, that risked all, won eternal supremacy over men. Corinth, with larger capital, more central situation, perhaps with a long start in culture, was never fit for the first place. In the poems of Homer, it is known as rich and important, but even then subject to the rule of Agamemnon of Mycenæ, a city small and remote, with no such advantages as Corinth, and yet taking the supremacy in that part of the Peloponnesus. The very name of the city is not thoroughly fixed in Homer, who calls it Ephyre as well as Corinth, as if the latter name had difficulties in establishing its sway. The very form, indeed, suggests the analogous name of Tiryns, which in Greek should either be Tirys or Tirynthus, the ending in *ns* being disagreeable to Greek ears. If there ever was such a form as Corins, it gave way to the name we know, which had supplanted Ephyre before proper history dawned in Greece.

When the so-called Heracleids and Dorians invaded the Morea, Corinth, like the rest, became subject to a Doric aristocracy, afterwards well-known as the Bacchiadæ, who ruled over the older or Achæan population with more or less severity. But even then the trade of Corinth was assured, and there are few early facts or anecdotes about the city which do not turn upon the mercantile side of life. To Corinth belonged the honour of founding Syracuse, the queen of Sicilian cities, as well as the historic city on the island of Corcyra, which under the name of Corfu has remained famous and popular as a summer resort for Greeks, a winter resort for Northerners, up to the present day. Archias of Corinth was the founder of Sicilian greatness, and if his date was fixed at the tenth generation from his ancestor, the god Heracles, this invention of parentage and antiquity does not displace the fact that he carried the old Phœnician spirit of his city into the most brilliant of its developments, that of foreign colonization. At Corinth were first built ships of war, and their mettle first tried in battle between the mother city and its colony at Corfu. Thucydides puts this event at 664 B.C. ; about the time, in my opinion, when the colonization of Magna Græcia and of Sicily was being undertaken.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this point I have given details in my *History of Greek Literature*, vol. i. app. B, and in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

Corinth, as might be expected, was the scene of one of those supplantations of Doric aristocrats by a despot who protected and promoted the interests of the older population; and the history of the dynasty of Cypselus, as well as of the early adventures and successes of the founder, form one of the most attractive episodes in the fascinating history of Herodotus. Here is an extract for which the reader not familiar with that prince of narrators will thank me.

'The constitution of the Corinthians was formerly of this kind: it was an oligarchy, and those who were called Bacchiadæ governed the city; they intermarried only with their own family. Amphion, one of these men, had a lame daughter, her name was Labda; as no one of the Bacchiadæ would marry her, Eetion, son of Echecrates, who was of the district of Petra, though originally one of the Lapithæ, and a descendant of Cæneus, had her. He had no children by this wife, nor by any other; he therefore went to Delphi to inquire about having offspring; and immediately as he entered, the Pythian saluted him in the following lines: "Eetion, no one honours thee, though worthy of much honour. Labda is pregnant, and will bring forth a round stone; it will fall on monarchs, and will vindicate Corinth." This oracle, pronounced to Eetion, was by chance reported to the Bacchiadæ, to whom a former oracle concerning Corinth was unintelligible, and which tended to the same end as that of Eetion, and was in these terms: "An eagle broods on the rocks;" and shall bring forth a lion, strong and carnivorous, and it shall loosen the knees of many. Now ponder this well, ye Corinthians, who dwell around beauteous Pirene and frowning Corinth."

'Now this, which had been given before, was unintelligible to the Bacchiadæ; but now, when they heard that which was delivered to Eetion, they presently understood the former one, since it agreed with that given to Eetion. And though they comprehended, they kept it secret, purposing to destroy the offspring that should be born to Eetion. As soon as the woman brought forth, they sent ten of their own number to the district where Eetion lived, to put the child to death; and when they arrived at Petra, and entered the court of Eetion, they asked for the child; but Labda, knowing nothing of the purpose for which they had come, and supposing that they asked for it out of affection for the father, brought the child, and put it into the hands of one of them. Now, it had been determined by them in the way, that whichever of them should first receive the child, should dash it on the ground. When, however, Labda brought and gave it to one of them, the child, by a divine providence, smiled on the man who received it; and when he perceived this, a feeling of pity restrained him from killing it; and, moved by compassion, he gave it to the second,

<sup>1</sup> The words αἰετὸς, 'an eagle,' and πέτρησι, 'rocks,' bear an enigmatical meaning; the former intimating 'Eetion,' and the latter his birthplace, 'Petra.'



and he to the third; thus the infant, being handed from one to another, passed through the hands of all the ten, and not one of them was willing to destroy it. Having therefore delivered the child again to its mother, and gone out, they stood at the door, and attacked each other with mutual recriminations; and especially the first who took the child, because he had not done as had been determined; at last, when some time had elapsed, they determined to go in again, and that every one should share in the murder.

‘But it was fated that misfortunes should spring up to Corinth from the progeny of Eetion. For Labda, standing at the very door, heard all that had passed; and fearing that they might change their resolution, and having obtained the child a second time might kill it, she took and hid it, in a place which appeared least likely to be thought of, in a chest; being very certain, that if they should return and come back to search, they would pry everywhere; which in fact did happen, but when, having come and made a strict search, they could not find the child, they resolved to depart, and tell those who sent them that they had done all that they had commanded.

‘After this, Eetion’s son grew up, and having escaped this danger, the name of Cypselus was given him, from the chest. When Cypselus reached man’s estate, and consulted the oracle, an ambiguous answer was given him at Delphi; relying on which, he attacked and got possession of Corinth. The oracle was this: “Happy this man, who is come down to my dwelling; Cypselus, son of Eetion, king of renowned Corinth; he and his children, but not his children’s children.” Such was the oracle. And Cypselus, having obtained the tyranny, behaved himself thus: he banished many of the Corinthians, deprived many of their property, and many more of their life.

‘When he had reigned thirty years, and ended his life happily, his son Periander at first was more mild than his father; but when he had communicated by ambassadors with Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, he became far more cruel than Cypselus. For having sent a nuncio to Thrasybulus, he asked in what way, having ordered affairs most securely, he might best govern the city. Thrasybulus conducted the person who came from Periander out of the city, and going into a field of corn, and as he went through the standing corn, questioning him about, and making him repeat over again, the account of his coming from Corinth, he cut off any ear that he saw taller than the rest, and having cut it off, he threw it away, till in this manner he had destroyed the best and deepest of the corn. Having gone through the piece of ground, and given no message at all, he dismissed the nuncio. When the nuncio returned to Corinth, Periander was anxious to know the answer of Thrasybulus; but he said that Thrasybulus had given him no answer, and wondered he should have sent him to such a man, for that he was crazy, and destroyed his own property, relating what he had seen done by Thrasybulus.

‘But Periander, comprehending the meaning of the action, and understanding that Thrasybulus advised him to put to death the most eminent of the citizens, thereupon exercised all manner of cruelties towards his subjects; for whatever Cypselus had left undone, by killing and banishing, Periander completed.’<sup>1</sup>

These were perhaps the greatest days of Corinth, for Periander counted afterwards among the Seven Sages of Greece, and Herodotus elsewhere tells us that when gold offerings were first proposed for the gods, there could only be found at Corinth a sufficient quantity of that precious metal. But nevertheless, all its commerce, and its power under the Cypselids, could not



RUINS OF THE OLD TEMPLE AT CORINTH.

make it a serious rival to Sparta and Athens. In the great struggle with the Persians, Corinth fought indeed on the patriotic side, but not without suspicion. In the following century we find the Corinthians the foremost of the second-class powers, representing the grievances and difficulties of the lesser members of the Spartan Confederation, but nowhere taking a real lead in affairs.

But I cannot here follow out this long and intricate history. Suffice it to say that the last struggle for old Greek independence, or what claimed to be such, was fought before Corinth, and that the sack and burning of that

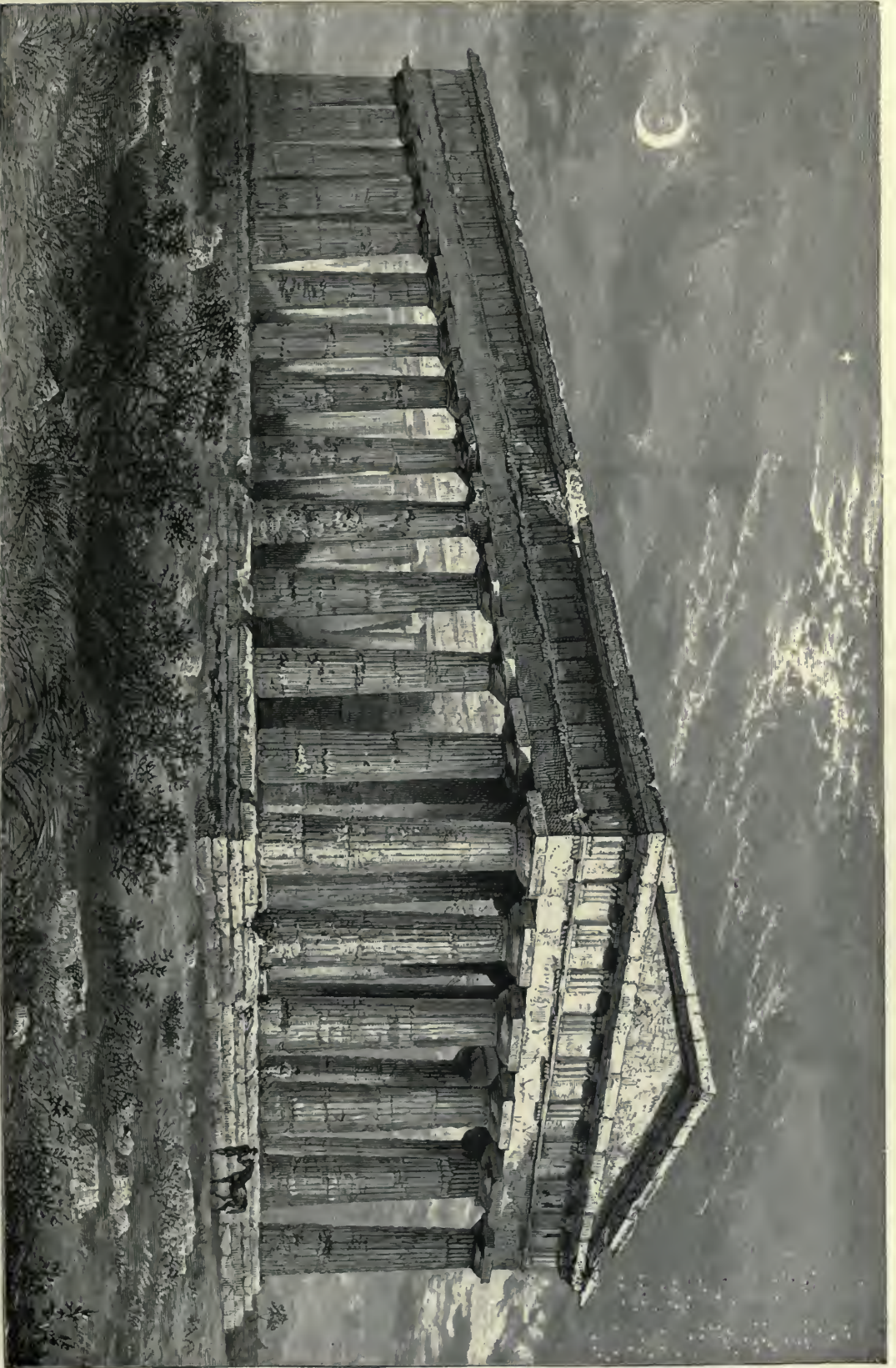
<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, v. 92 (Bohn's translation).



ancient and splendid city by the Roman Mummius (146 B.C.) has always counted as one of the great tragedies in history. Polybius witnessed this terrible scene, and saw the most precious art treasures tossed about for the sport of the boorish legionaries. Of all the Corinth which has so far occupied us, but one relic remains, the Doric pillars represented on the previous page. The style of these pillars, in their proportions most like those of the great temple at Pæstum in Italy, points to the seventh century B.C.; in any case to a period not later than Periander, who was not improbably their builder, for these tyrants always sought to occupy men's minds and hands in beautifying the outward appearance and public buildings of their cities. They were art-patrons on principle.

The rest of old Corinth is gone. The very site was cursed by the Romans, for their merchants desired to kill all competition in their trade, and were ready enough to call in religion to protect usury. Nevertheless, the great Julius Cæsar disregarded both the greed of the speculators and the sanctions of their interested creed, and undertook to restore both Corinth and its sister in calamity as well as in mercantile prosperity, the city of Carthage. The idea of the great Cæsar took hold on the trading world. We know little of the rebuilding of the city, save what Strabo tells us—that in digging for foundations people came upon the older tombs, in which were found quantities of antique pottery, which became high fashion at Rome under the title of *Necro-Corinthia*. It was the curious semi-Oriental kind, with animals in red and black, now so common in our museums. So then under Augustus, in the first years of the Christian era, Corinth had just risen from its ashes, and resumed its position as one of the most important trading towns in the Levant. And, as might be expected, the Jews, who had for two centuries past occupied trading ports on the coast of Asia Minor, were ready to take advantage of the new foundation, where they could reside with freedom and without social disabilities among the new and mongrel population of traders who thronged into this revived centre of business.

It has not, perhaps, been sufficiently noticed that this is the kind of town chosen by the Apostle Paul as the fruitful seat of his missionary labours—not the ancient seats of Greek aristocracy, such as Sparta, Argos, Athens, but those newer or newly-revived towns where there was a strong Jewish nucleus to begin with. The Macedonian towns, to which we shall come in due time in our peregrinations, were just of this kind. The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians were fortunately occupied with far more important topics than any description of the city and its society, so that it is only through indirect and casual allusion that they can give us any help. Still, a careful perusal of them, especially of the First, does show some details such as we should have expected from this new-old foundation, this collection of mercantile people under the favour of Roman enterprise. The



ANCIENT GREEK TEMPLE AT PESTUM.





epistles, by the way, are not addressed to Corinth only, but to the surrounding country, the Second formally to all the Christians in Achaia, which at that time meant the province of Achaia, and included all that we now call Greece. But there were only two other towns in this province of the same composite character as Corinth—Patras, which I have already mentioned, and Nicopolis, whose ruins are still so imposing at the head of the Gulf of Arta. This latter was the foundation of Augustus, to celebrate his victory at Actium; and he depopulated the neighbourhood to gather in people enough for his memorial city.

It was to such composite cities that St. Paul specially turned his attention, in the first instance, no doubt, on account of the nucleus of Jews to be found there; for though he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, the faith which he preached was always in connection with the Jewish religion, testified by their sacred books, developed in and from their nation. So we find in the First Epistle that he addresses Jews and Greeks in turn, referring the former, for instance, to the feast of unleavened bread in the fifth chapter; and to the passage of the Red Sea, in the tenth—while, again, the constant reminder that he is not talking wisdom or philosophy, but preaching Christ, is intended for Hellenic readers. Thus he places in the forefront of the First Epistle these words: ‘And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.’<sup>1</sup> In addition to this we find distinctly Roman disciples mentioned, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Caius, Prisca; and we even hear that the meat market was known by its Latin name, *macellum*. He tells us, furthermore, as perhaps we might expect, that not many wise, or powerful, or noble persons had joined the new faith, which generally made its way first among the poor and the distressed; but still, in the Second Epistle, he presses upon them the importance of sending contributions to Jerusalem, with the distinct implication that the Corinthian brethren were far better able to contribute than those of Macedonia, who had shown far greater readiness. It is not usually noticed that to the Jewish Christians this sending of gifts to Jerusalem was only the continuation of an old and universal habit among the *diaspora*, or Jews scattered abroad over the world, who had for centuries back supported and enriched the Temple with regular stated offerings, so that here again Christian was concatenated with Jewish practice. These facts are of great importance in accounting for the common confusion of Jews and Christians which took place among the Roman rulers of that century.

Of course we might fairly expect that among so mixed a congregation variations of opinion should occur, and so the apostle urges a complaint not only of the *heresies*—an old and mild word for peculiar opinions in philosophy—but of the clefts or *schisms*—a strictly New Testament word—

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 2.



which agitated that Church. We are not surprised to find in the details which follow, that the sexual side of life occupied much of their attention. It had long been painfully prominent in their heathen cults; and so the natural reaction against these shameful disorders led some to a strongly ascetic and celibate theory, while others asserted the laws of Nature. To this controversy St. Paul gives much of his attention.

There is another problem which we naturally find discussed in his Corinthian letters, and in a manner perhaps to most readers unexpected—I mean the question of the gift of tongues. In a great trading port, or pair of ports, such as Cenchreæ and Lechæum, which harboured ships from all parts of the known world, many men of many languages must have sojourned, and here, if anywhere, any miraculous power of teaching in foreign tongues would naturally find its scope. We find, too, that this gift was asserted at Corinth, but never for the purpose of reaching foreigners. It was exhibited within the Church, at her services, and, as St. Paul clearly says, to the confusion and detriment of these services. For no one could understand the speaker unless he were interpreted; and so the apostle restricts the use of the gift, and demands that the interpretation shall accompany it. Nevertheless—and this is a strong and curious corroboration of the narrative of the Acts—he does not for a moment deny this miraculous inspiration; he even claims himself to have the gift of tongues more than any of his readers; he will not forbid it absolutely in the churches; the strange thing is, that he never thinks for one moment of exhorting that this curious gift shall be applied to the conversion of the heathen who did not understand Greek or Hebrew. He himself too, travelling over the world, and often meeting with barbarians, never, so far as we know, used any other language than Greek, or, exceptionally, the Hebrew of the day, in his teaching. So completely was the preaching of Christianity bound up with the language of the civilised world, which every cultivated man, Roman or Oriental, was bound to understand. The gift of tongues, so far as we are informed about it, was a miraculous manifestation of the Spirit upon certain occasions, and not a practical engine for the spreading of the Gospel. In this feature, then, the original preaching of the Gospel differs widely from the noble missionary efforts of recent centuries, when the Bible has been translated into myriad languages, and pious men spend years of their life in the acquisition of barbarous tongues.

As regards distinctly local allusions, they are, as I have said, but few. There is the well-known reference to the Isthmian games, which might have been written and understood anywhere: ‘Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?’ Even so run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not

beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.<sup>1</sup> There is perhaps another local allusion in iii. 10–15 of the First Epistle; which in talking of good architects laying good foundations, and building upon them with various materials, adds that the work of each will be tested by fire—a curious and not very obvious application, unless we suppose the writer to allude to the re-opening and re-handling of the old ruins of the city, which had been burnt to the ground, by the builders of New Corinth. Doubtless they found that some foundations, and even some walls, had withstood the conflagration, owing to the soundness of their construction; others had not, and so there may have been special aptitude for a metaphor which seems far-fetched without some such explanation.

But I am not going to write a commentary on St. Paul's Epistles, and must therefore abandon this fascinating digression, which was introduced



THE ACRO-CORINTHUS.

only to give the Christian reader a special interest in this most pagan of all Hellenic cities. As I said before, Corinth is gone: earthquakes and malaria have cleared away all but the great Doric pillars of one old temple; and so in our own century, when Corinth once more had the chance of becoming the capital of Greece, the assembled delegates of the new nation (in 1829), after long discussion, decided against Corinth, and in favour of Athens, for the new capital—a great mistake from the archæological point of view, for we should now have excavated the whole of ancient Athens, had its site lain clear, and possibly found precious things at Corinth, which has not yet been explored. But the fate of Corinth, as usual, was against its supremacy. Let us now, however, ascend the famous citadel, the Acro-Corinthus, so often the scene of historic conflicts.

‘A winding path leads up on the south-west side to the Turkish

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24–27.



drawbridge and gate, which are now deserted and open ; nor is there a single guard or soldier to watch a spot once the coveted prize of contending empires. In the days of the Achæan League, it was called one of the fetters of Greece, and indeed it requires no military experience to see the extraordinary importance of the place. Strabo speaks of the Peloponnesus as the Acropolis of Greece—Corinth may fairly be called the Acropolis of the Peloponnesus. It runs out boldly from the surging mountain-chains of the peninsula, like an outpost or sentry, guarding all approach from the north. In days when news was transmitted by fire signals, we can imagine how all the southern country must have depended on the watch upon the rock of Corinth.

‘The day was too hazy when we stood there to let us measure the real limits of the view, and I cannot say how near to Mount Olympus the eye may reach in a suitable atmosphere. But a host of islands, the southern coasts of Attica and Bœotia, the Acropolis of Athens, Salamis and Ægina, Helicon and Parnassus, and endless Ætolian peaks, were visible in one direction ; while, as we turned round, all the waving reaches of Arcadia and Argolis, down to the approaches towards Mantinea and Karytena, lay stretched out before us. The plain of Argos, and the sea at that side, are hidden by the mountains. But without going into detail, this much may be said, that if a man wants to realise the features of these coasts, which he has long studied on maps, half an hour’s walk round the top of this rock will give him a geographical insight which no years of study could attain.’<sup>1</sup>

The Isthmus, which is really some three or four miles north of Corinth, was of old famous for the Isthmian games, as well as for the noted *diolkos*, or road for dragging ships across. The games were founded about 586 B.C., when a strong suspicion had arisen throughout Greece concerning the fairness of the Elean awards at Olympia, and for a long time Eleans were excluded. In later days the games became very famous, the Argives or Cleonæans laying claim to celebrate them. It was at these games that Philip V. heard of the great defeat of the Romans by Hannibal, and resolved to enter into that colossal quarrel, which brought the Romans into Macedonia. The site of the stadium and of the temple of Isthmian Zeus, though well determined, has not, so far as I know, been yet systematically excavated.

Close by I saw in 1889 the interrupted work of the canal which was at last to connect the eastern and western gulfs, and which when well nigh completed found its funds dissipated by the terrible crash of the Credit Mobilier in Paris, and now awaits another enterprise. The idea is old, and often discussed, like that of the Isthmus of Suez. The Emperor Nero actually began the work, and the engineers of to-day resumed the cutting at the very spot where his workmen had left off. But if this very expensive work might have been of great service when sailing ships feared to round

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 342-344.

the notorious Cape of Malea, and when there was great trade from the Adriatic to the ports of Thessaly and Macedonia, surely all these advantages are now superseded. Steamers coming from the Straits of Messina would pay nothing to take the route of the Isthmus, in preference to rounding the Morea, and the main line of traffic is no longer to the Northern Levant, but to Alexandria. Even goods despatched from Trieste or Venice may now be landed at Patras, and sent on by rail to Athens; so that the canal will now only serve the smallest fraction of the Levantine traffic, and even then, if the charges be at all adequate to the labour, will be avoided by circumnavigation. Amid the promotion of many useful schemes of traffic, this undertaking seems to me to stand out by its want of common sense. Indeed, had it been really important at any date, we may be sure that the Hellenistic Sovrans or Roman capitalists would have carried it out. But in classical days their smaller ships seem to have been dragged across upon movable rollers by slaves without much difficulty.







STRAITS OF SALAMIS.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MEGARA, ELEUSIS, AND DAPHNE.

THE journey from Corinth to the capital may either be undertaken by sea, passing among those myriad headlands, islands, coasts, which make the landscape in Greece so distinctive and so beautiful, or in the railway which trends along the precipitous coast, skirting those Scironian hills once famous for brigands in Greek legend, and commanding from its right windows, as I saw it in April 1889, an enchanting prospect across the Argolic gulf to Ægina, Salamis, and the coasts of Argolis. The outlines were gentle, but very various; the setting sun was burnishing the glassy surface of the water into gold, and clothing the mountains and islands in rich rose colour and in purple. Our party were all old travellers, to whom Italy, Switzerland, and the northern highlands of Europe were quite familiar; and yet we were all agreed that nowhere had any of us seen colour so rich, tones so soft, outlines so varied, not to speak of the great historic suggestions which make this tiny corner of Europe more satisfying to the traveller than all the combined wealth and waste of the Western world. Here again, too, we have impressed upon us the natural isolation of each Greek city with its surrounding plain. Corinth is isolated by steep moun-

tains from Megara; Megara, always Doric and Peloponnesian, by a strong bar ending in a bold promontory from Eleusis, the first Attic site on the way; Eleusis again by a similar bar from the rest of Attica, so that the train wanders miles inland to find a pass into the proximate Athens.

We cannot dally over Megara, in spite of its interesting history. It was the home of Theognis, the poet who of all others has painted for us the crimes and violences of the old aristocrats in the Greek cities, such as those whom Cypselus displaced in Corinth. The hatred and contempt for the lower classes which he displays is only equalled by that in France before the Revolution, which was so terribly avenged; and indeed Thucydides details events at Corcyra in a civil war between the nobles and commons which equal in horrors the worst outrages of the Reign of Terror. Then we find Megara always the Doric outpost towards Attica, whose people nevertheless depended upon the Attic border markets, and when these were closed by war, Aristophanes brings upon his stage the starving Megarian ready to sell his daughters for bread. The port of Nicæa was joined to Megara by long walls, in imitation of those of Themistocles; and even now the site of port and city is easily determined, as we land in the quiet bay, and look up at the thriving town, inhabited by Albanians still wearing the picturesque costume which Greek women so readily abandon for European tawdriness.

Let us pass the barrier that separates us from Eleusis, and descend upon that more famous town. In these days it has even increased in interest, for the recent excavations have laid bare the old sites, and revealed to us the plan and peculiarities of the temple and service, which had no equal or rival in sanctity or in splendour. We knew well enough that great crowds attended the famous Mysteries of Demeter, but we did not know till lately that they were accommodated in the vast inner precincts of the temple, which was cut out of the live rock in its inner parts, and furnished with three rows of steps cut in the rock, so as to accommodate a great crowd of people. No other shrine, or inner room of a temple, is of anything like these dimensions, the temple itself being a Doric structure, with its front upon a lofty platform looking out on the Bay of Eleusis.

I will only add, as regards the fine Doric style of the remains, that what at first appeared to us as clearly the work of the best Attic architects, now turns out to be excellent Roman imitation, done in consequence of some conflagration or earthquake which, in the first or second century A.D.—perhaps in Hadrian's time—ruined the old Doric temple. Both Dr. Dörpfeld and M. Philios, the learned Greek who is now set as overseer over these remarkable ruins, seem agreed upon this point, and it is only one more example how easily we can be imposed upon by good *archaistic* work, which imitates the genuine archaic.

'It is, of course, the celebrated Mysteries—the *Greater Eleusinia*, as they were called—which give to the now wretched village of Eleusis, with its



hopeless ruins, so deep an interest. This wonderful feast, handed down from the remotest antiquity, maintained its august splendour all through the greater ages of Greek history, down to the times of decay and trifling, when everything else in the country had become mean and contemptible. To what did it owe this transcendent character? It was not because it worshipped exceptional gods, for the worship of Demeter and Cora was an old and widely diffused cult all over Greece; and there were other Eleusinia in various places. It was not because the ceremony consisted of mysteries, of hidden acts and words, which it was impious to reveal, and which the initiated alone might know. For the habit of secret worship was practised in every state, where special clans were charged with the care of special secret services, which no man else might know. Nay, even within the ordinary homes of the Greeks there were these Mysteries. Neither was it because of the splendour of the temple and its appointments, which never equalled the Panathenæa at the Parthenon, or the riches of Delphi or Olympia. There is only one reasonable cause, and it is that upon which all our serious authorities agree. The doctrine taught in the Mysteries was a faith which revealed hopeful things about the world to come; and which—not so much as a condition, but as a consequence, of this clearer light, this higher faith—made them better citizens and better men. This faith was taught them in the Mysteries through symbols,<sup>1</sup> through prayer and fasting, through wild rejoicings; but, as Aristotle expressly tells us, it was reached not by intellectual persuasion, but by a change into a new moral state—in fact, by being spiritually revived.

‘Here, then, we have the strangest and most striking analogy to our religion in the Greek mythology; for here we have a higher faith publicly taught—any man might present himself to be initiated—and taught, not in opposition to the popular creed, but merely by deepening it, and showing to the ordinary worldling its spiritual power. The belief in the goddess Demeter and her daughter, the queen of the nether world, was, as I have said, common all over Greece; but even as nowadays we are told that there may be two kinds of belief of the same truths—one of the head and another of the heart—just as the most excellent man of the world, who believes all the creeds of the Church, is called an unbeliever, in the higher sense, by our Evangelical Christians: so the ordinary Greek, though he prayed and offered at the Temple of Demeter, was held by the initiated at the Mysteries to be wallowing in the mire of ignorance, and stumbling in the night of gloom—he was held to live without real light, and to die without hope, in wretched despair.’<sup>2</sup>

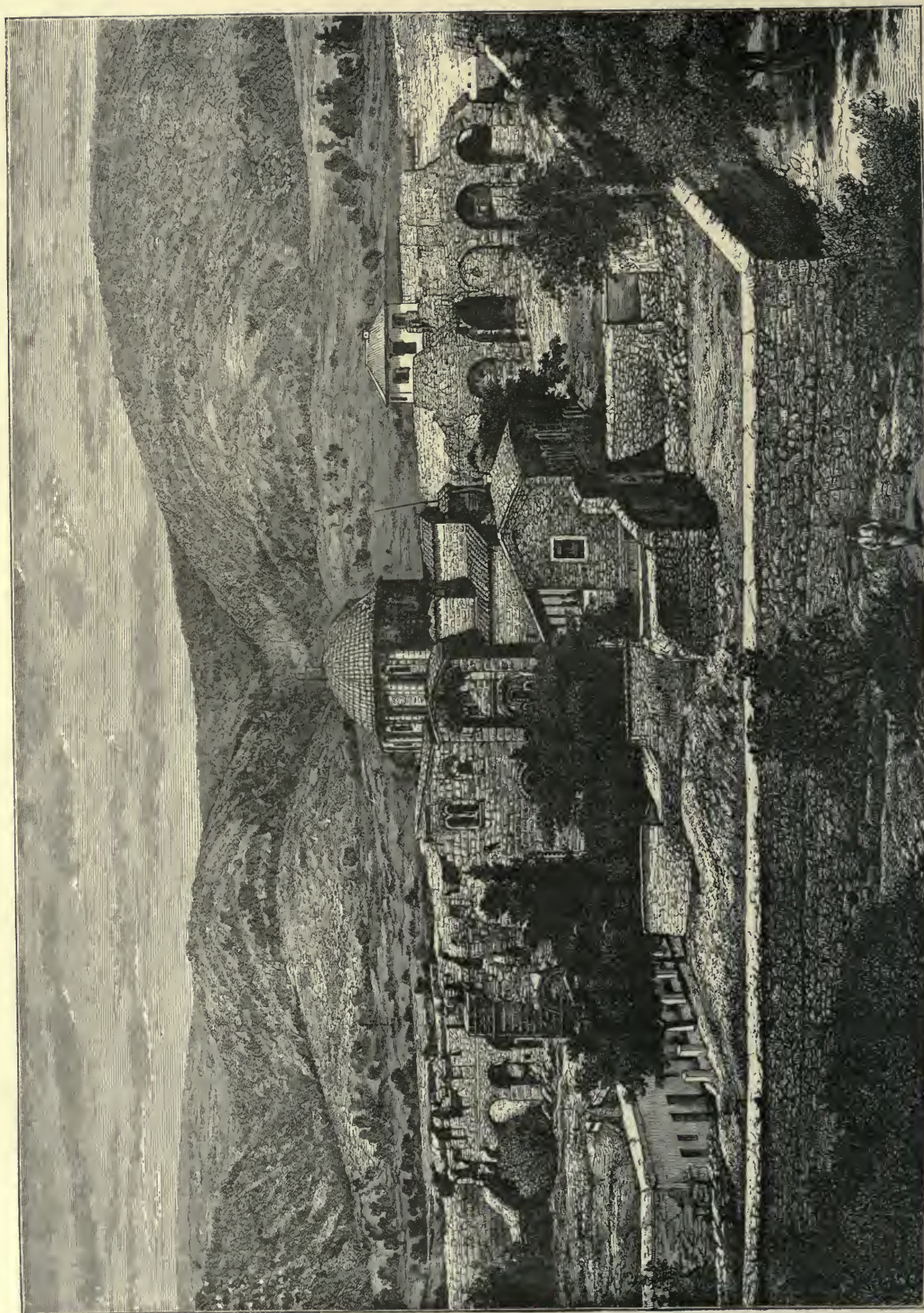
The traveller from Eleusis will prefer to leave the train, and go by a

<sup>1</sup> There seems no doubt that some of these symbols, derived from old Nature-worship, were very gross, and quite inconsistent with modern notions of religion. But even these were features hallowed and ennobled by the spirit of the celebrants, whose reverence blinded their eyes, while lifting up their hearts.

<sup>2</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 183–186.







THE MONASTERY OF DAPHNE.



far shorter and more historical route along the 'sacred way,' up to the pass of Daphne, from whence he will presently obtain one of the finest views of Athens. But, before he comes to that, he will arrive at the curious Byzantine convent of Daphne, with its church still unrestored, and with its tombs of Frankish knights to remind him that when the old classical splendour was gone, Greece became in her turn the land of chivalry, where knights errant and crusaders turned aside from their sacred mission to indulge in the sports and amenities of the most luxurious and refined knightly courts. These were the days when the West indeed held the East, when the pleasaunce of Thebes, of Mistra or Clarentza could pose as the model of what the glories and delights of barons and ladies might attain. And with them they sought to introduce the Latin Church of the West, which came into many a conflict with the bigoted, conservative, metaphysical Eastern Church. A good example of this hostile contact is afforded by the monastery of Daphne. This sanctuary, with its now decaying walls, succeeded as usual to a pagan shrine with hardly altered name. The saints, still pictured in black and gold upon the walls, and worshipped upon their festivals, have become fantastic and unreal beings, well enough adapted to that mixture of superstition and rationalism which is the body of the Greek religion, and, despite a purer creed, not very far removed from the religious instincts of the old Hellenic race. Five, or six wretched monks still occupy this dilapidated building, vegetating in sleepy idleness; they do nothing but repeat daily their accustomed prayers, and receive dues for allowing the people of the neighbouring hamlets to kiss, once or twice a year, a dreadful-looking Byzantine St. Elias, painted olive-brown on a gold background, or to light the nightly lamp at the wayside shrine of a saint black with smoke.

The structure as we now see it is the construction of the Cistercians who accompanied Otho de la Roche from Champagne to his dukedom of Athens, and was established round a far older Byzantine church and monastery. Like all mediæval convents, it is fortified, and the whole settlement, courts and gardens included, is surrounded by a crenelated wall originally about thirty feet high. There are occasional towers in the wall, and remains of arches supporting a walk all round the wall, of sufficient altitude for the defenders to look over the battlements. The old church in the centre of the court has had a narthex or nave added in Gothic style by the Benedictines, and here again are battlements, from which the monks could send down stones or boiling liquid upon assailants who penetrated the outer walls. Three sides of the court are surrounded by buildings; beneath, massive arcades of stone for the kitchen, storerooms, and refectory; above, wooden galleries supply the monks with their cells. Most of it is now in ruins, occupied in part by peasants and their sheep. But the church, both in its external simplicity and its internal grandeur, is remarkable for the splendid decoration of its walls with mosaics, which, alas! have been allowed



to decay as much from the indolence of the Greeks as the intolerance of the Turks. In fact, while some care and regard for classical remains have gradually been instilled into the minds of the inhabitants—of course, money value is an easily understood test—the respect for their splendid mediæval remains has only gained Western intellects within the last two or three years, so that we may expect another generation to elapse before this new kind of interest will be disseminated among the possessors of so great a bequest from the Middle Ages.

The interior of the church at Daphne is a melancholy example. From the effects of damp the mortar has loosened, and great patches of the precious mosaic have fallen to the ground. You can now pick up handfuls of glazed and gilded fragments, of which the rich surfaces were composed. Here and there a Turkish bullet has defaced a solemn saint, while the fires lit by soldiers in days of war, and by shepherds in time of peace, have, in many places, blackened the roof beyond recognition. Within the central cupola, a gigantic head of Christ on gold ground is still visible, or was so when I saw the place in 1889; but the whole roof was in danger of falling, and the Greek Government, at the instigation of Dr. Dörpfeld, are undertaking to stay the progress of decay, and so the building was filled with scaffolding. This, however, enabled us to mount close to the figures, which in the short and high building are seen with difficulty from the ground, and so we distinguished clearly round the base of the cupola the twelve apostles, in the bay arches the prophets, in the transepts the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism, and the Transfiguration of Christ—all according to the strict models laid down for such ornaments by the Greek Church. The drawings are indeed stiff and grotesque, but the gloom and mystery of the building hide all imperfections, and give to these imposing figures in black and gold a certain majesty, which must have been felt tenfold by simple worshippers not trained in the habits of æsthetic criticism.

We have, unfortunately, no records of their history in these convents, as is the case in so many Western abbeys, and the old chronicles of wars and pestilences seldom mention their quiet life. We should fain, says M. Henri Belle, have followed the fortunes of these monks who left some fair abbey in Burgundy to catechize schismatics in this distant land, and bring their preaching to aid the sword of the crusaders; but these crusaders were generally intent on exchanging their white cross for a crown, and were therefore not at all likely to favour the rigid proselytism of the Cistercians. It is very interesting to know that Innocent III., that great pope, who from the outset disapproved of the violent overthrow of the Christian Empire of the East, was the first to recommend both to the conquerors and their clergy such moderation as might serve to bring back the schismatic Greeks to the Roman fold. There are still extant several of his letters to the abbeys of the Morea, and to this abbey of the duchy of Athens, showing that even

his authority and zeal in this matter were unable to restrain the bigotry of the Latin monks. There were frequent quarrels, too, between these monks of Daphne and their duke, and frequent appeals to the sovran pontiff to regulate the relations between the civil authority, which claimed the right of suzerain, and the religious orders, which claimed absolute independence, and immunity from all service. Still, in spite of all disputes, the abbey was the last resting-place of the Frankish Dukes of Athens, and in a vault beneath the narthex we have found several of their rude stone coffins, without inscription or ornament. One only has carved upon it the arms of the second Guy de la Roche, third Duke of Athens—two entwined serpents surmounted with two fleurs-de-lis. Guy II., says the chronicle, behaved as a gallant lord, beloved of all, and attained great renown in every kingdom. He sleeps here, not in the darkness of oblivion, but obscured by greater monuments of the greater dead. Yet I cannot but dally over this interesting piece of mediæval history, the more so as it explains the strange title of Theseus, Duke of Athens, in Shakespere's immortal *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as the curious fact, at least to classical readers, that the poet should have chosen Athens as a court of gracious manners, and suitable for the background of his fairy drama.





SUNIUM.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PLAINS OF ATTICA.

A FEW minutes' drive from the monastery of Daphne brings us to the turn of the slope from which we gain our first, and perhaps most splendid view of Athens. Nearer to us is the long dark green belt of olives along the valley of the Kephissus. Over against us Hymettus shuts off the further and wilder tracts of Southern Attica. To the north reaches the rich plain till closed by Mount Pentelicus, though we see the pass which leads out over an easy incline north-east to Marathon. Close under us, stretching up towards Mount Parnes, almost behind us to the north-west, is the great deme of Acharnæ, of which we hear so much in Aristophanes. The view is very beautiful, varied, and richly coloured; yet, after all, its history far outruns its natural features. The situation of any city in such a plain, girdled by various mountains, commanding from its heights the sea and many islands, could not but be celebrated. Yet if Athens were like Berlin, in the midst of a desert of sandy flats, and Berlin in the place of Athens, the Greek town would be fascinating and delightful, the German relatively commonplace.

Of course the best central point from which to survey the principal plain of Attica is from the Acropolis, or citadel of Athens. I do not feel that I can add much to what I have elsewhere written and rewritten on this splendid view:

'When you stand upon the Acropolis and look round upon Attica, a great part of its history becomes immediately unravelled and clear. You see

at once that you are placed in the principal plain of the country, surrounded with chains of mountains in such a way that it is easy to understand the old stories of wars with Eleusis, or with Marathon, or with any of the outlying valleys. Looking inland on the north side, as you stand beside the Erechtheum, you see straight before you, at a distance of some ten miles, Mount Pentelicus, from which all the splendid marble was once carried to the rock around you. This Pentelicus is a sort of intermediate cross-chain between two main lines which diverge from either side of it, and gradually widen so as to form the plain of Athens. The left or north-western chain is Mount Parnes; the right or eastern is Mount Hymettus. This latter, however, is only the inner margin of a large mountainous tract, which spreads all over the rest of South Attica down to the Cape of Sunium. There are, of course, little valleys, and two or three villages, one of them the old deme Brauron, which they now pronounce Vravron. There is the town of Thorikos, near the mines of Laurium; there are two modern villages called Marcopoulos; but on the whole, both in ancient and modern times, this south-eastern part of Attica, south of Hymettus, was, with the exception of Laurium, of little moment. There is a gap between Pentelicus and Hymettus, nearly due north, through which the way leads out to Marathon.

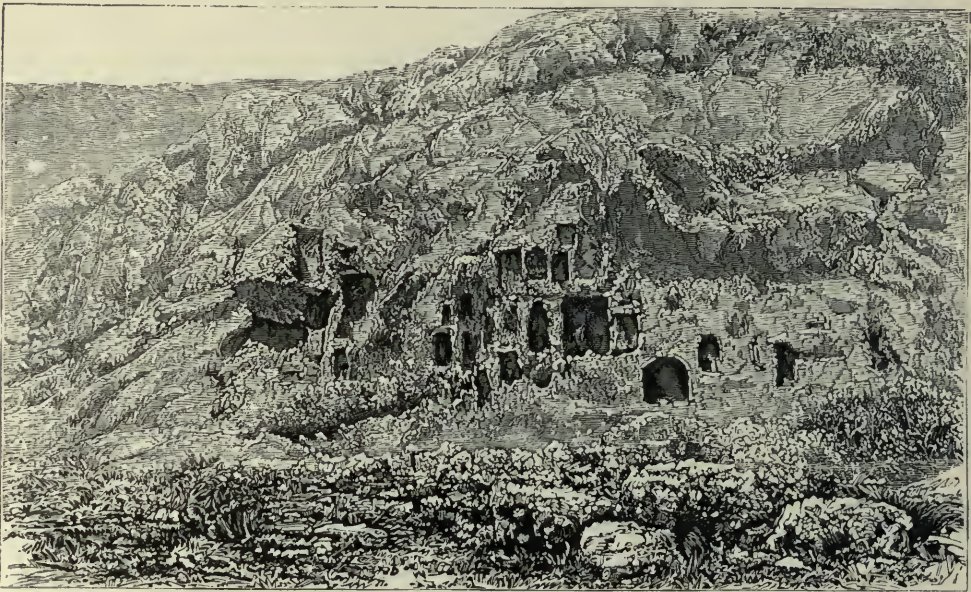
‘On the left side of Pentelicus you see the chain of Parnes, which almost closes with it at a far distance, and which stretches down all the west side of Attica, till it runs into the sea as Mount Corydallus, opposite to the island of Salamis. In this long chain of Parnes (which can only be avoided by going up to the northern coast at Oropus, and passing into Bœotia close by the sea) there are three passes or lower points, one far to the north—that by Dekelea, where the present king has his country palace, but where of old Alcibiades planted the Spartan garrison which tormented and ruined the farmers of Attica. This pass leads you out to Tanagra in Bœotia. Next to the south, some miles nearer, is the even more famous pass of Phyle, from which Thrasybulus and his brave fellows recovered Athens and its liberty. This pass, when you reach its summit, looks into the northern point of the Thriasian plain, and also into the wilder regions of Cithæron, which border Bœotia. The third pass, and the lowest—but a few miles beyond the groves of Academe—is the pass of Daphne, which was the high road to Eleusis, along which the sacred processions passed in the times of the Mysteries; and in this pass you still see the numerous niches in which votive tablets had been set by the worshippers at a famous temple of Aphrodite.

‘If we turn and look southward we see a broken country, with several low hills between us and the sea—hills tolerably well cultivated, and, when I saw them in May, all coloured with golden stubbles, for the corn had just been reaped. But all the plain in every direction seems dry and dusty;



arid, too, and not rich alluvial soil, like the plains of Bœotia. Then Thucydides' words come back to us, when he says Attica was "undisturbed on account of the lightness of its soil," as early invaders rather looked out for richer pastures. This reflection, too, of Thucydides applies equally to the mountains of Attica round Athens, which are not covered with rich grass and dense shrubs, like Helicon, like Parnassus, like the hills of Arcadia, but seem so bare, that we wonder where the bees of Hymettus can find food for their famous honey.

'But, amid all the dusty and bare features of the view, the eye fastens with delight on one great broad band of dark green, which, starting from the left side of Pentelicus, close to Mount Parnes in the north, sweeps straight down the valley, passing about two miles to the west of Athens, and



NICHES FOR VOTIVE OFFERINGS ON THE SACRED WAY TO ELEUSIS.

reaching to the Piræus. This is the plain of the Kephissus, and these are the famous olive woods which contain within them the deme Colonus, so celebrated by Sophocles, and the groves of Academe, at their nearest point to the city. The dust of Athens, and the bareness of the plain, make all walks about the town disagreeable, save either the ascent of Lycabettus, or a ramble into these olive woods. The river Kephissus, which waters them, is a respectable, though narrow river, even in summer often discharging a good deal of water, and dividing itself into trenches and arms, which are very convenient for irrigation. So there is a strip of country, fully ten miles long, and perhaps two wide on the average, which affords delicious shade and greenness and the song of birds, instead of hot sunlight and dust and the shrill clamours of the tettix without.



‘There is no other excursion in the immediate vicinity of Athens of any like beauty or interest. The older buildings in the Piræus are completely gone. No trace of the docks or the *deigma* remains; and the splendid walls, built, as Thucydides tells us, with cut stone, without mortar or mud, and fastened with clamps of iron fixed with lead—this splendid structure has been almost completely destroyed. We can find, indeed, elsewhere in Attica—at Phyle, still better at Eleutheræ—specimens of this sort of building; but at the Piræus there are only foundations remaining. Yet it is not really true that the great wall surrounding the Piræus has totally



PIRÆUS (RESTORED), SHOWING THE LONG WALLS.

disappeared. Even at the mouth of the harbour, single stones may be seen lying along the rocky edge of the water, of which the size and the square cutting prove the use for which they were originally intended. But if the visitor to the Piræus will take the trouble to cross the hill, and walk round the harbour of Munychia, he will find on the eastern point of the headland a neat little café, with comfortable seats, and with a beautiful view. The sea-coast all round this headland shows the bed of the surrounding sea wall, hewn in the live rock. The actual structure is preserved in patches on the western point of this harbour, where the coast is very steep; but, in the place to which I refer, we can trace the whole course of the wall a few



feet above the water, cut out in the solid rock. I know no scanty specimen of Athenian work which gives a greater idea of the enormous wealth and energy of the city. The port of Munychia had its own theatre and temples, and it was here that Pausanias saw the altar to *the gods called the unknown*. The traces of the sea wall cease as soon as it reaches the actual narrow mouth of the little harbour.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the views and visits immediately round Athens. But this is only a small fraction of the country which can be seen by easy excursions from this famous capital. In every direction, towards every point of the compass, are splendid walks and drives occupying one, two, or three days, all replète with historical associations, as well as with natural beauty. To the north you may either ascend Mount Pentelicus with its marble quarries which supplied the Parthenon and Propylæa, or turn to the right into the plain of Marathon, or to the left to Tatoi or Dekelea. Or else you may turn east into the *Diakria*, or highlands, and, crossing Hymettus and the narrow straits, enter the wilds of Eubœa, where the wild boar will still afford you sport. Or you can go south to the glittering Sunium, with its lead mines and its scorix—a rare specimen of old Greek ugliness, beside one of their fairest temples—and then to Ægina and Salamis, where every step reminds you of the legends of Pindar, the narrative of Herodotus, and the stage of Sophocles; or you may turn west to Daphne, to Phyle, and the wild mountains which lead to Cithæron, and into Bœotia.

To describe in detail all this country would occupy the rest of this book. I must therefore be content with saying a word about two of these excursions, that to Phyle and that to Marathon. Each of them can be accomplished in a day, though for Marathon the distance demands a rather longer time. But each, as the scene of the liberation of Athens from threatened slavery, is of prime historical importance. At Marathon in 490 B.C. some 10,000 Greeks defeated a very large army of Persians, who had effected a landing, and were at the time soldiers of quite as high repute as the Greeks. In fact, Herodotus says that here first the Athenians dared to look the Persians in the face. For these were still in that day a great conquering race. Let us come closer to this historic scene.

‘The plain of Marathon, as everybody knows, is a long crescent-shaped strip of land by the shore, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, which may be crossed conveniently in three places, but most easily towards the south-west, along the road which we travelled, and which leads directly to Athens. When the Athenians marched through this broad and easy passage, they found that the Persians had landed at the northern extremity of the plain—I suppose, because the water was there sufficiently deep to let them land conveniently. Most of the shore, as you proceed southwards, is lined on the seaboard by swamps. The Greek army must have marched

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies*, pp. 131-138.

northwards, along the spurs of Pentelicus, and taken up their position near the north of the plain. There was evidently much danger that the Persians should force a passage through the village of Marathon, farther towards the north-west. Had they done this, they might have rounded Pentelicus; and descended the main plain of Attica, from the valley below Dekelea. Perhaps, however, this pass was then guarded by an outlying fort, or by some defences at Marathon itself. The site of the battle is absolutely fixed by the great mound, upon which was placed a lion, which has been carried off, no one knows where or whither. This mound is exactly an English mile from the steep slope of one of the hills, and about half a mile from the



THE MOUND AT MARATHON.

sea at present; nor was there, when I saw it, any difficulty in walking right to the shore, though a river flows out there, which shows, by its sedgy banks and lofty reeds, a tendency to create a marshy tract in rainy weather. But the mound is so placed that, if it marks the centre of the battle, the Athenians must have faced nearly north; and, if they faced the sea eastward, as is commonly stated, this mound must mark the scene of the conflict on their left wing. The mound is very large—I suppose thirty feet high—altogether of earth, so far as we could see, and bears traces of having been frequently ransacked in search of antiquities. Dr. Schliemann, its latest investigator, could find nothing there but pre-historic flint weapons.



Like almost every view in Greece, the prospect from this mound is full of beauty and variety—everywhere broken outlines, everywhere patches of blue sea, everywhere silence and solitude.

‘Byron may well be excused his raving about the liberty of the Greeks, for truly their old conflict at Marathon, where a few thousand ill-disciplined men repulsed a larger number of still worse disciplined Orientals, without any recondite tactics—perhaps even without any very extraordinary heroism in the actual conflict—has maintained a celebrity which has not been equalled by any of the great battles of the world, from that day down to our own.

‘In spite of all scepticism, in spite of all contempt, the battle of Marathon, whether badly or well fought, and the troops at Marathon, whether well or ill trained, will ever be more famous than any other battle or army, however important or gigantic its dimensions. Even in this very war, the battles of Salamis and Plataea were vastly more important and more hotly contested. The losses were greater, the results were more enduring, yet thousands have heard of Marathon to whom the other names are unknown. So much for literary ability—so much for the power of talking well about one’s deeds. Marathon was fought by Athenians; the Athenians eclipsed the other Greeks as far as the other Greeks eclipsed the rest of the world in literary power. This battle became the literary property of the city, hymned by poet, cited by orator, told by aged nurse, lisped by stammering infant; and so it has taken its position, above all criticism, as one of the greatest decisive battles which assured the liberty of the West against Oriental despotism.’<sup>1</sup>

The trip to Phyle is hardly less interesting than to Marathon, and through a very different country. It is usual to drive to the foot of the mountain, and then to have mules or ponies ready for the long and laborious ascent. The system of defence towards the Bœotian frontier seems to have been the establishing of strong forts, not within sight of the enemy but within a short distance of the summit of the passes leading into Attica. We may presume that in war times a picket or outpost was kept on the summit, which was within easy signalling range of the fort. From this, fire-signals acquainted Athens with the enemy’s movements. The forts were strong by position and structure, and so an invading force must either delay to besiege them, or have an active intrenched force in its rear, cutting off supplies and intelligence from without, and ready to fall upon the retreating invaders, if they were defeated. Two of these forts—that called Eleutheræ, on the high road to Thebes, and this one of Phyle—are still in good preservation, evidently built at the best period of Greek building, and probably of the age of Pericles. We know that it was the regular practice to make young citizens serve for two years in outpost duty, before they settled

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies*, pp. 172-174, 176.

down to their civic duties. In these forts, then, they must have learned the art of war, the complicated passes and defiles of the Attic highlands, and those various experiences which change the foolish and helpless recruit into the smart, handy, resourceful soldier. Any one who has seen, for example, our regiments in Egypt when first arriving, and after a year or two of campaign, will know exactly what I mean. So the young Attic *peripoli*, or patrols, guarded the frontiers, and learned to know the intricate ways through the mountains.

The way from Athens leads north-west through the rich fields of the old deme of Acharnæ; and we wonder at first why they should be noted as charcoal-burners. But as we approach Mount Parnes, we find that the valley is bounded by tracts of hillsides fit for nothing but pine forest. A vast deal of wooding still remains; it is clear that these forests were the largest and most convenient to supply Athens with fire-wood or charcoal. As usual there are many glens and river-courses through the rugged country through which we ascend—here and there a village, in one secluded nook a little monastery, hidden from the world, if not from its cares. There is the usual Greek vegetation beside the path, not perhaps luxuriant to our Northern eyes, but full of colour of its own—the glowing anemone, the blood-red poppy, the delicate cistus on a rocky surface, with foliage rather grey and silvery than green. The pine trees sound as the breeze sweeps up the valleys, and lavish their vigorous fragrance through the air. There is something inexpressibly bracing in this solitude, if solitude it can be called, where forest speaks to the eye and ear, and fills the imagination with the mystery of its myriad forms. Now and then too the peculiar cadence of those bells which hardly varies throughout all the lands of the South, tells you that a flock of goats, or goat-like sheep, is near, attended by solemn silent children, whose eyes seem to have no expression beyond that of vague wonder in their gaze. These are the flocks of some village below, not those of the nomad Vlachs, who bring with them tents and dogs, and make gipsy encampments in the unoccupied country.

At last we see high over us the giant fort of Phyle, set upon a natural precipice, which defends it amply for half its circuit. Its sudden appearance in Greek history is in the days of the Thirty Tyrants (403 B.C.), when many murders and exiles of patriotic citizens had taken place, and the fortunes of Athens, after the surrender of the city to the Spartans two years before, were indeed at the lowest ebb. Her only remaining treasure—that liberty which had so often stirred the citizens to great deeds—was now taken from her; free discussion in the market-place, and fair trial in the courts were suppressed. It seemed, indeed, that all was lost, even honour, when the news spread through Greece that the fort of Phyle had been seized by Thrasybulus, and a small party of Athenian exiles. It is quite incorrect to say that he could have built the fort, which must have taken years and

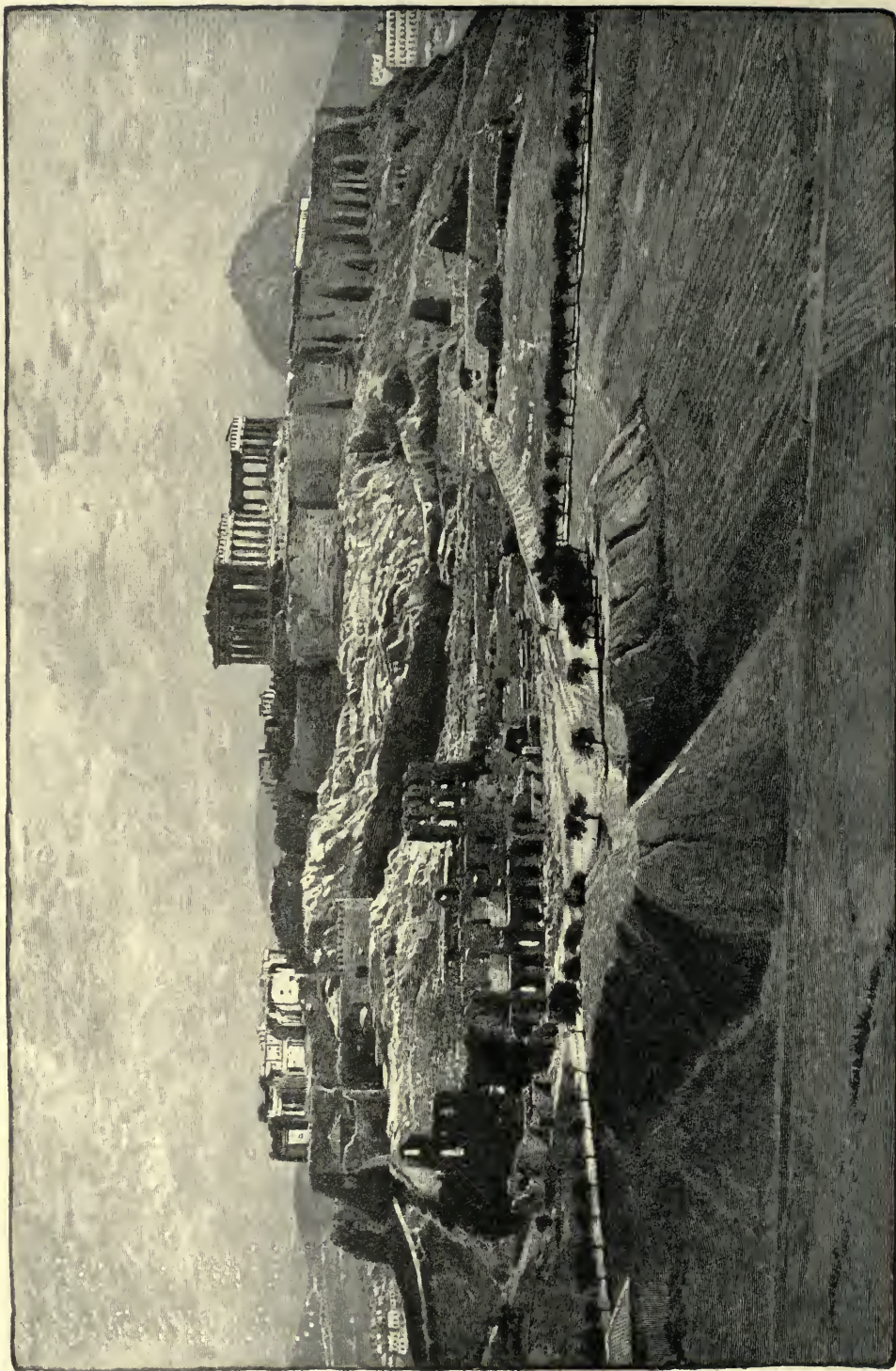


vast slave labour to construct ; he may possibly have repaired some spots where the masonry had given way, for the Thirty Tyrants seem to have neglected this and other outposts ; nor had the disasters of the previous years allowed the Athenians to think about these outlying fortifications.

The point of occupation was well chosen, for, while it was near enough to Athens to afford a sure refuge to those who could escape by night and fly to the mountain, its distance (some fifteen miles), and the steep and rugged ascent, made it impossible for weak and aged people to crowd into it, and mar the efficiency of the garrison. With the increase of his force Thrasybulus began successful raids into the plain, then a rapid movement to Piræus ; ultimately, as may be read in all the histories, he accomplished the liberation of his native city. Let me add, before passing on, that the conduct of the restored democracy, both in discharging the state obligations incurred by the tyrants, and in adhering loyally to their generous act of amnesty, is quite the most remarkable passage in the history of a state which, if always intellectually brilliant, was not often morally splendid. But we too must delay no longer to invade the sacred city which we can see from afar down through the valleys of Mount Parnes.

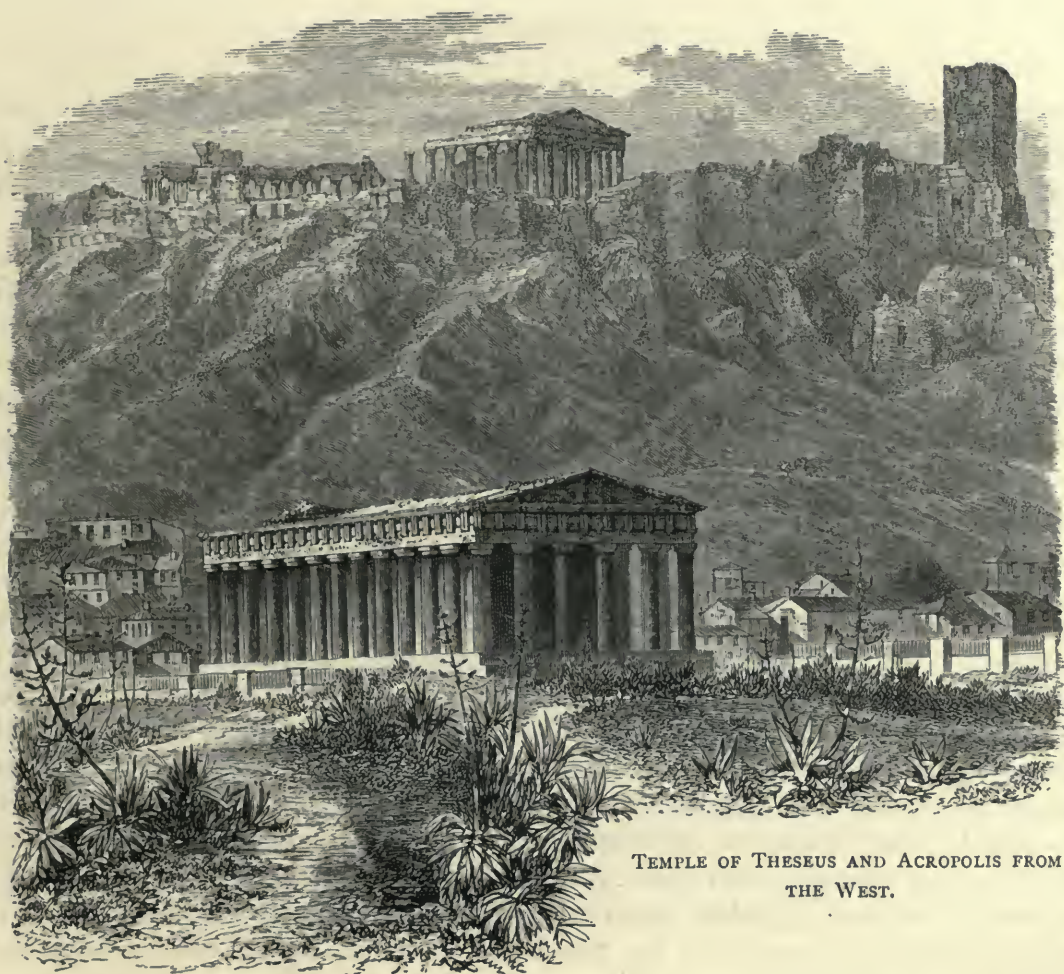






THE ACROPOLIS FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.





TEMPLE OF THESEUS AND ACROPOLIS FROM  
THE WEST.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ATHENS.

THE geographer Strabo, who, though a great traveller, seems never to have visited Athens, puts off his readers very ingeniously with the exclamations of wonder borrowed from an artificial rhetorician. Any modern writer who takes upon him to describe this unique city cannot but feel some sympathy with this piece of literary dishonesty; for as all men have agreed that no language can be adequate to the task, it seems an audacious thing to court preordained failure. Yet to write a book on Greece, and omit Athens, would of course be absurd. Much more reasonable is the course pursued by the editor of the excellent French *Guides Joanne*, who gives a separate volume on Athens and Attica, to be followed by a second on the rest of Greece. This division expresses justly the relative importance of the



famous capital in regard to the rest of the country. What the readers of this book may reasonably expect is a sketch of Athenian history, avoiding details, and yet clear enough to afford them a picture which their imagination can grasp and reproduce. Let us then set ourselves to the task.

The first appearance of Attica in legend is as that part of Greece (with Arcadia) which was not peopled by successive invaders, but by an old and indigenous population. The legend is here false. For though that district was not, like Bœotia and other rich tracts of land, the constant battleground of new invaders, we know both that the Ionian Greeks came into Attica with the migration of the Aryans from the East, and also that, long after that, the Phœnicians had their settlements, and established their religion at Athens. The legends of the reign of Theseus, on the other hand, contain germs of the first important stage of Attic history. In the first place, it was he who brought the neighbouring towns and villages together, and made Attica *one*, with Athens for the capital. Up to his day each valley—Eleusis, Marathon, &c.—had been separate and independent. This was the case all over Greece; and it was precisely in proportion to the earliness and completeness of such amalgamations that Greek states attained greatness. So Sparta, Argos, Thebes gradually took the step taken far earlier by Attica, and, last of all, Epaminondas attempted the same thing for Arcadia by the foundation of Megalopolis. In the second place, the many stories of his conflicts with the Amazons—the mythical garb of the armed priestesses of the Sidonian Astarte—show that Phœnician influences were now opposed and overcome by the rising national spirit of the Greeks. When we come down to real history, this Eastern influence is gone, save perhaps in the luxury of dress and ornament described by Thucydides as existing in older Attic life—flowing robes, long tresses of hair, and gold ornaments being worn among men. His language suggests to us figures like those of the old Assyrians rather than those of any Greeks we know in history. From these days and these manners date the bee-hive tombs found at Menidi or Spata in Attica, where they laid their dead in vaulted chambers of stone, with urns, and ornaments of gold and ivory.

The long line of mythical kings, with their adventures, which formed the subject of many tragedies, such as the *Erechtheus* of Mr. Swinburne in our day, ended with the division of power among the rival families of nobles, who made the principal office rotatory—at length annual; and with this change, in 683 B.C. (probably the earliest genuine date in Greek history), the annals of Attica commence. But here, as elsewhere, the government by aristocratic clans turned out both tyrannous and extravagant. After the elaborate purifications for bloodguilt and consequent pestilence by Epimenides, a semi-fabulous wonder-worker, we have the great economic and political reforms of Solon, the second founder of Athenian greatness. The recognition of wealth as a sister claim with ancestry to power and authority in ruling

the state saved the Attic aristocracy, as it has saved the English, for many a generation. Solon is a great historical figure; we have fragments of his poetry, as well as the general sketch of his legislation, and we can well endorse the general verdict of the nation which placed him among the Seven Sages of Greece. He foresaw clearly the chronic danger arising from the non-existence of a standing military force in the hands of the government. If a revolution were attempted, no prompt assistance could be expected from peaceable and busy citizens. Hence it was that he made neutrality in such a conflict penal—an idle enactment, but a declaration of political foresight.

What Solon anticipated actually happened. Amid the conflicts of parties, a clever and ambitious noble made himself the champion of the common people, and seized the supreme power. But, most fortunately, he was far more than a mere tyrant, and by his wise patronage of art and literature may fairly be called the third founder of Attic greatness. For to him are due the first dissemination among the people of epic poetry, of the nascent drama, of a taste for architecture and plastic art, of that inclination for æsthetic pleasures whereby he sought to wean them from over-attention to politics. Of course, his opposition to Solon, whom he merely set aside without a single act of unnecessary violence, his education of his sons, who, though his heirs in artistic matters, were also the distorters of his policy into that of licentious oppression, his many namesakes, inferior tyrants, that made the title to stink in the nostrils of the nation; all these things have detracted, perhaps justly, from his fame. Nevertheless it can never be forgotten that the Athens of Pisistratus was distinctly the first artistic Athens. Thespis began his rude tragedies in those days; choral and gnomical poets at the Attic court, as well as the public recitations of Homer, paved the way, by educating the people, for the public who could understand and appreciate Pindar and Æschylus. So too we may refer to him the first notions of great temples, which, by adorning the city, would also honour the gods; and doubtless the curious figures recently found among the foundations of old buildings on the Acropolis are to be referred to his day. If, therefore, the first political Athens we know is that of Solon, the first artistic Athens is that of Pisistratus, in the middle of the sixth century B.C.

The Acropolis of that day was very far different even in surface from the splendid area of Pericles. Instead of the great plateau, which the victorious democracy created by tossing in all the ruins of the Persian fury between the surrounding wall and the central rock, we must conceive the surrounding wall of the Acropolis, which was the refuge for the citizens from the open town below in case of danger, as a necklace, so to speak, round a high cone, on the sides and top of which were many small temples and secular buildings. All these and the votive offerings were painted with bright, perhaps even gaudy colours; and the type of the many goddesses who stand

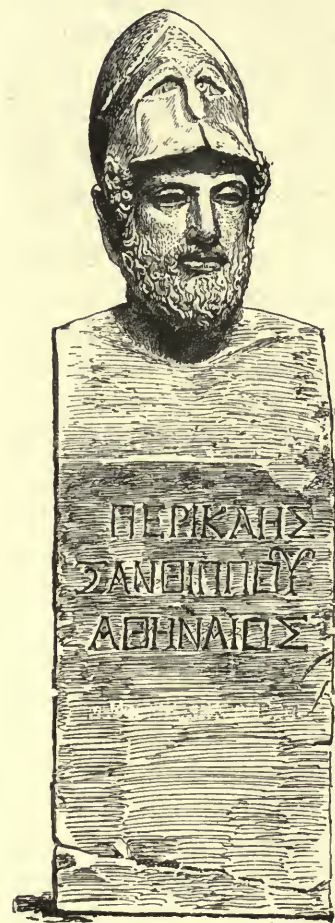


in the Acropolis Museum, is more Oriental than Greek, more barbaric than civilised. There is perhaps no recent discovery which has told us more of the cradle stage of Greek art, and which has more shocked the ordinary visitor to Athens. Here in the very heart and shrine of the purest and most perfect sculpture the world has ever seen, the astonished visitor walks in upon a gallery of stony smirking ladies, all with conventional tresses, dresses, and types of face, in whom beauty, or indeed nature, is totally

absent. And it is not their rudeness so much as their conventionality which shocks us. Yet this art was the immediate antecedent to the really artistic work which led by natural development to Phidias. Nor was Phidias a hundred years posterior to this apparently hide-bound growth.

But consider what a hundred years they were! In the middle of them came that great invasion and overthrow of the Persians, which had upon Greece an effect as great as the French Revolution had upon Europe in the last century. For this pressing external danger was nearly synchronous with that great political development into civic liberty of which Athens was the clearest type. The tyrants were expelled for their private vices, and a constitution was formed, far in advance of that of Solon, which found its first trial in the defence of Greece against the overwhelming masses of the Oriental despot. The liberation from the despots was in 510 B.C. Apart from struggles with neighbours, such as Ægina, the Persian conflicts lasted from 490 to 479, and were doubtless viewed with terror a year or two before the storm burst.

I must refer to the immortal narrative of Herodotus, so often transcribed by later historians, for the details of this war—how timidity and treachery tied the hands of the Greeks, how even the oracle of Delphi gave up the patriotic side, how, against all



PERICLES.

chances and probabilities which man could compute, the hand of God—shown not only in the creation of men worthy of the occasion, but in the shaping of circumstances so as to turn human wisdom into folly, and human greatness into vanity—ordained victory for the disunited, vacillating, quarrelling Greeks. *Afflavit Deus, et dissipati sunt*, might have been the motto of the war, though there were three shocks of battle, in which both Athenians and Spartans showed that they could look the warlike Persians in the face.

Out of this war then Athens came victorious, and presently the leader

of maritime Greece, rapidly assuming imperial powers, and acquiring a wealth unknown to older generations. The marvellous circumstances of the city produced that generation of extraordinary energy, to whom even the modern Americans must cede in the pace of their development. This is the day when Attic art became the model for all the world ; when sculptors and architects attained, almost suddenly, that unequalled skill in portraying and idealising Nature, in planning and working with splendid materials, which has ever since been the delight and the despair of artists. It is to the middle of the fifth century B.C., and a little later, that we can refer those buildings which still draw the world to see their defaced fragments at Athens, or in the gloomy chambers of the British Museum. This then is the Athens which has fascinated the imagination of men, the Athens of Pericles and Phidias, of Thucydides and Sophocles, of Myron and Polygnotus, of Aristophanes and Cleon, of Phormion and Demosthenes.<sup>1</sup>

There are two towns in Europe which remind the visitor strongly of Athens. The one is Edinburgh, the other is Salzburg. Both have the peculiarity of being situated round a rocky fortress, which rises from the streets ; both possess a higher hill of less importance, though apparently dominating the town from a short distance. But while Salzburg has besides many splendid sub-alpine features, a rushing river, a showy belt of mountains in sight, which make this town the most beautiful in all Europe, Edinburgh has surroundings far more analogous to those of Athens. It has its castle, as I have said, and its Arthur's Seat, corresponding to the Acropolis and Mount Lycabettus at Athens ; it has also rolling country



SOPHOCLES.

<sup>1</sup> The general killed at Syracuse.



around, hills of moderate height, and a seaport within a few miles. Thus it commands sea and hills in a manner not unlike Athens. The modern city of Athens has covered most of the ancient site first with poor hovels and shops, then with showy mansions, and so destroyed all the suggestions of antiquity which an abandoned site might have preserved. But out of it and over it stands the great rock, which even centuries of neglect and of violence could hardly impair, though they shattered and mangled its buildings in detail.

The first thing any visitor must do is to ascend the rock, and study both the details around him and the panorama displayed on every side. The last thing he will do, after all his arrangements for departure are complete, is to hurry up once more to the immortal rock, to take another last view, and tear himself with a great wrench from the one spot which he may fairly say is the greatest and most fascinating he ever saw in his life. The traveller through America feels disposed to class the Americans in two large categories—into those who have, and those who have not, seen Europe. In a similar kind of way, one feels inclined to class those who travel in Europe for instruction and for pleasure into two distinct classes—those who have, and those who have not, seen the Acropolis. I do not, of course, include among the former those tourists who have stopped at the Piræus for some hours, and driven up to Athens and back, who are told by some guide-books still tolerated among semi-civilised men, that a few hours are enough to devote to Athens. Such people cannot be said to see any place they visit, least of all Athens. But a proper honest study of the Acropolis is an epoch in the art training of any man, and, so far as the æsthetic side of man influences his morals, a progress in purity and in tolerance. I say the latter, because he will learn, what is now perhaps conceded, but what was generally denied in the great Gothic revival of the last generation, that classic architecture can be as religious, as minutely conscientious, as dignified as the Norman French cathedrals. I say it furthermore because he will learn that the most artistic of all nations thought it right to colour the white marble of both statues and temples with brilliant hues. I say the former because he will learn how a great idea, a noble plan, should dominate even the most exquisite artistic details, how the sculptor, however great, must subordinate himself to the architect, and work not for himself, but for the perfection of the building. He will further learn that the shackles so put upon the artist, far from checking his genius, have elicited the most exquisite resources of his imagination. The composition of a worthy group to fill the triangular space (pediment) formed by the east and west gables of a temple produced results greater than all the unshackled work of the same artists, just as the top of a round barrel suggested to Raphael one of his most charming subjects.

But let us descend to some details. The sacred rock, as I have said,

was early fortified and covered with buildings and votive offerings. But the capture of the place by the Persians in 480 B.C., and the burning and defacing of all the monuments, left the victorious and returning Athenians in the face of a grave problem. What were they to do for the restoration of the temples and shrines of their gods? The tamest and most obvious course was to restore with minute fidelity all that had been damaged, and make the Acropolis as like as possible to that of Pisistratus. But a great original age of art, a generation of unparalleled energy, a period of rapid growth in design and in the control of materials, could never be satisfied with such a solution. Athens was now richer, nobler, greater, than she ever had been, and must accordingly live up to her enhanced renown. I am not sure that the artists even regretted very deeply the hostile defacing of the old monuments, for in this way only could they be set aside with safety, as no longer worthy of the gods and the imperial city. No doubt there must have been a conflict between the old-fashioned party and the new; but if there was, the wisdom of the fathers was so completely turned to the children that the defaced buildings were not only pulled down, but, with the defaced statues, piled into the places where the declivity was being transformed into a terrace. Never were the gods of a nation treated with more signal disrespect. There are the archaic figures which have been discovered, one after another, in the excavations of the platform formed round the Parthenon; and in the raised wall there are drums of the pillars of the older temples, notably of the Parthenon of Cimon, which was smaller and ruder than that of Pericles, though built on a much more carefully finished substruction of stone slabs. I suppose this very careful building of mere walls on stone foundations is the only point in Pisistratic or Themistoclean architecture which is not surpassed by the greater age which supervened. I remember Dr. Dörpfeld telling me at Athens that such was the exquisite care and finish of every detail in the Parthenon, notably of the invisible parts, that he regarded it as a piece of extravagance worth executing once, but never again to be repeated. I observed that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when men helped to build great churches as a good work, to effect the salvation of their souls, a similar lavishing of artistic care on details out of sight was also to be found. Nor can we regret that spirit which does work splendidly and exactly for the love of God, or for the love of the work itself, regardless of the notice or the praise of men.

When the visitor now makes his way round the approach to the famous sanctuary, and comes in sight of the great flight of stairs leading to the entrance gate, or Propylæa, he sees above him, on the right, a sort of protruding bastion crowned by a little Ionic temple, that of Athena as Victory. This building was surrounded by a parapet of upright marble slabs adorned with figures of winged Victories, which are famous for their



delicate beauty. The whole structure is indeed of the same character, and affords us the first example of what can be done by sensible restoration. All the pillars and walls were set up in recent years from the fragments lying about in confusion where the Venetians or Turks had built their lofty tower, now fortunately removed. Nobody will now argue that this restoration was not really valuable; and if the same principle was applied to the many pillars of the Parthenon, which lie prostrate almost as they were blown down in 1687, that greater building would regain some of its pristine majesty.

But before us stands the great Propylæa, or entrance portico of the

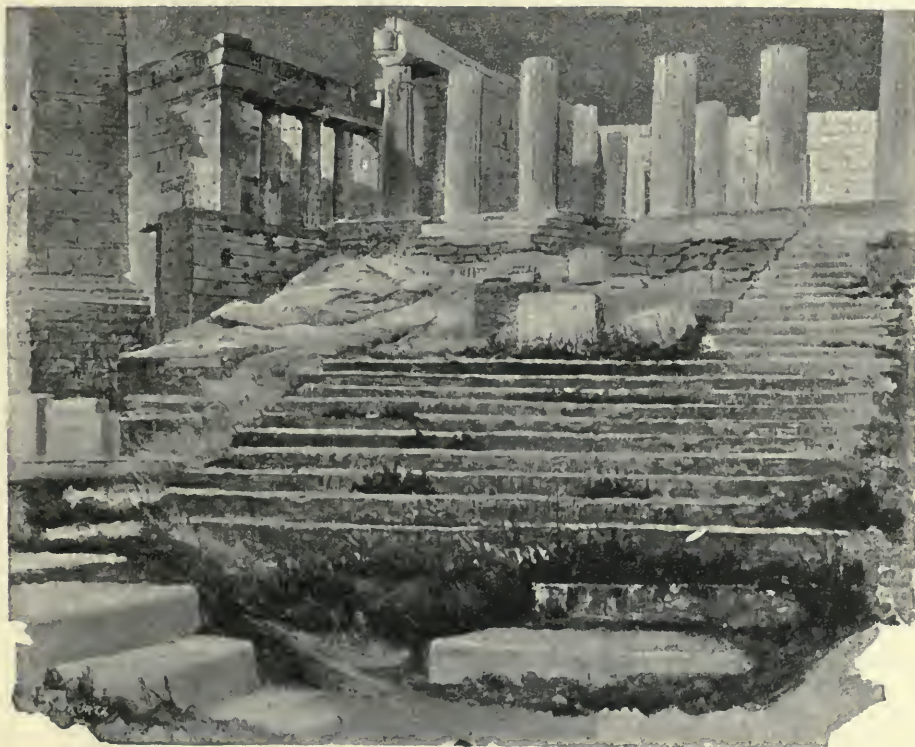


THE TEMPLE OF VICTORY, ACROPOLIS.

architect Mnesicles, which was hardly less celebrated than the Parthenon, and which we find copied, alas! by some Roman builder of Hadrian's time at Eleusis. But even there the building is so noble that it passed till yesterday for the work of the rival of Ictinus. The plan of this gateway is that now known to us as the regular prehistoric design adopted at the palaces of Tiryns and of Troy. Let me describe this very ancient form of entrance more minutely. The actual door, whether single or double, was set in the wall, where it turned upon wooden hinges set in bronze cups, which worked in a stone hollow fitted to them—the frame or setting of the door being of stone. But the door was protected or ornamented both



inwards and outwards by a portico or vestibule, consisting of an architrave supported by two pillars, between which was the main entrance, while outside each of them was another side entrance, just as we see it carried out in all those simpler temple fronts called temples *in antis*, where the front wall is, so to speak, broken or stopped with pilasters, leaving an open front supported by two pillars, between which you enter the temple. In the oldest buildings this construction was of sun-dried bricks and of wood. The walls were of brick, and where they stopped, and exposed an end likely to be worn by traffic or weather, they were finished with a wooden coating, of



THE STEPS AND PROPYLÆA OF THE ACROPOLIS.

which the later square pilasters are the survival in stone. The upper beam spanning the open passage was also a long beam of wood, supported by two wooden stems, set on stone bases. Remains of this construction have been found, and carefully described by Dr. Dörpfeld in his masterly chapter to be found in Dr. Schliemann's *Tiryns*.

This, too, is the very plan which we see ennobled and perfected in the Propylæa of Mnesicles. But all the earlier members of wood and brick are now replaced by beautiful Pentelic marble; the depth of the porticoes is increased, and, for variety's sake, while the outer row of pillars in both directions are Doric, the richer Ionic order is employed for the inner



supports, which are under the marble roof. It had been easy enough, in the case of the old wooden porticoes, to find a strong beam, or beams, of oak, long enough to span the opening above. But it required no small labour to quarry and bring up to the Acropolis, still more to set over pillars twenty-five feet high, beams of marble twenty-two feet long. Yet this was done, care being taken, as in the case of almost all stone architraves, to use a pair of parallel beams, in case of a flaw or crack in one of them. These mighty marble cross-beams are still to be seen at the gateway, and lead the visitor at once to marvel with what mechanical appliances the Athenians accomplished such triumphs. For among other things noted by Plutarch in his *Life of Pericles* is the rapidity with which most of these perfectly finished and everlasting buildings were, so to speak, *run up*. There seems to be no evidence that they employed more than the primitive aids of ropes, rollers, and inclined planes, which we see at work in extant pictures of Egyptian and Assyrian transportation of colossal statues. There are, as Professor Tarbell pointed out to me, stray mentions of a windlass (ἐλιξ), and once of a pulley (τροχλία) in Aristophanes and in Plato; but even if these casual and rare notices be held to imply the common and developed use of such contrivances for great mechanical difficulties, the performances of the Athenian architects will appear very wonderful to those who study them. One power they possessed which can hardly be over-rated—an unlimited supply of slave labour, which they could apply lavishly, and without care how many lives they sacrificed. And we know that even now the human hand, with its manifold action directed by intelligence, is by far the most perfect mechanical engine constructed.

Balancing the temple of Nike on the right bastion, there is thrown forward on the left a beautifully simple Doric structure, which may have been a guard-room, or the artistic survival of that once requisite feature, for the defences of the Acropolis were now mere ornament; the city walls were the real safeguard. Here the visitor first sees what wall-building in marble could be, what the exquisite fitting of the blocks, what the contempt for mortar or other binding, when everything sat firm by its weight and fitting. The marble drums of the pillars are so smoothly joined that the nail runs without hindrance down the fluting. In the centre of each is a square plug of cypress wood, into which fits a circular piece of the same wood, so that it was possible to work round a new block after it was set on. But the fluting was no doubt worked on the pillars after they were set up, as was no doubt a great deal of the surface finishing. In many places are still remaining the protruding ends of stone left on an otherwise smoothed surface, for the purpose of giving a hold for ropes to lift it to its place. The colouring of this majestic structure is gone; the blue and gold and red have long since vanished; but the glaring white of the marble has not been recovered, save where some new breakage shows the inside of a

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PARTHENON, INTERIOR, RESTORED.



block ; for all the Acropolis has been toned to golden brown by the constant sandstone dust which now, as in the days of Aristophanes, sweeps over the light and friable soil of Attica.

When we pass the Propylæa, and stand before the temples which occupy the places of honour in the sacred enclosure, we have standing separately the most perfect specimens of those two orders of architecture which we saw combined in the gateway.

‘As the traveller stands at the inner gate of the Propylæa, he notices at once all the perfect features of the ruins. Over his head are the enormous architraves of the Propylæa—blocks of white marble over twenty-two feet long, which span the gateway from pillar to pillar. Opposite, above him and a little to the right, is the mighty Parthenon, not identical in orientation, as the architects have observed, with the gateway, but varying from it slightly, so that sun and shade would play upon it at moments differing from the rest, and thus produce a perpetual variety of lights. This principle is observed in the setting of the Erechtheum also. To the left, and directly over the town, stands that beau-



A CARYATID FROM THE ERECHTHEUM.

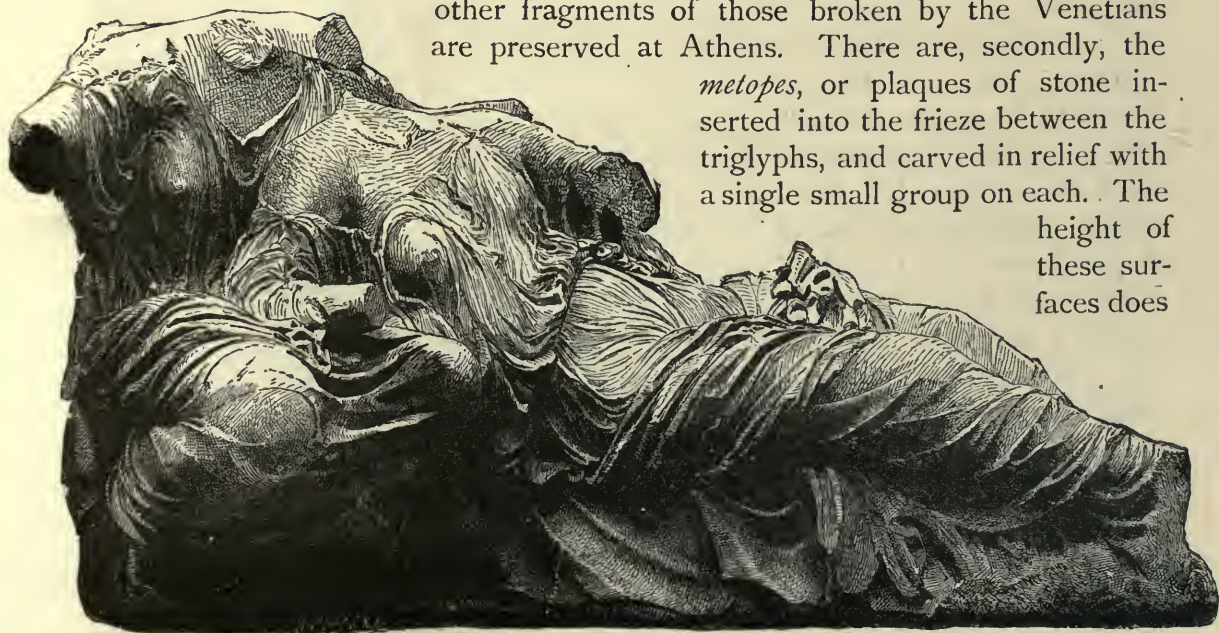
tifully decorated little Ionic temple, or combination of temples, with the stately caryatids looking inwards and towards the Parthenon. These two buildings are the most perfect examples we have of their respective styles. We see the objects of the artists who built them, at first sight. The one



is the embodiment of majesty, the other of grace. The very ornaments of the Parthenon are large and massive; those of the Erechtheum for the most part intricate and delicate. Accordingly, the Parthenon is in the Doric style, or rather in the Doric style so refined and adorned as to be properly called the Attic style.

The sculptured decorations of the Parthenon are of three kinds, or applied in three distinct places. In the first place, the two triangular *pediments* over the east and west fronts were each filled with a group of statues more than life-size—the one representing the birth of Athene and the other her contest with Poseidon for the patronage of Athens. Some of the figures from one of these are the great draped headless women in the centre of the Parthenon room of the British Museum: other fragments of those broken by the Venetians are preserved at Athens. There are, secondly, the

*metopes*, or plaques of stone inserted into the frieze between the triglyphs, and carved in relief with a single small group on each. The height of these surfaces does



FIGURES FROM THE PEDIMENT OF THE PARTHENON (BRITISH MUSEUM).

not exceed four feet. There was, thirdly, a band of reliefs running all round the external wall at the top of the cella, inside the surrounding pillars, and opposite to them, and this is known as the *frieze of the cella*. It consists of a great Panathenaic procession, starting from the western front, and proceeding in two divisions along the parallel north and south walls, till they meet on the eastern front, which was the proper front of the temple. Among the Elgin marbles there are a good many of the *metopes*, and also of the pieces of the cella frieze, preserved. Several other pieces of the frieze are preserved at Athens, and altogether we can reconstruct fully three-fourths of this magnificent composition.

‘The extraordinary power of grouping in the designs of Phidias is very completely shown us in the better-preserved band of the cella frieze,





THE ERECHTHEUM.



TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
CONGRESS

along which the splendid Panathenaic procession winds its triumphal way. Over the eastern doorway were twelve noble sitting figures on either side of the officiating priest, presenting the state robe, or *peplos*, for the vestment of Athene. These figures are explained as gods by the critics; but they do not, in either beauty or dignity, excel those of many of the Athenians forming the procession. A very fine slab, containing three of these figures, is now to be seen in the little museum in the Acropolis. This group over the main entrance is the end and summary of all the procession, and corresponds with the yearly ceremony in this way, that, as the state entrance, or Propylæa, led into the Acropolis at the west end, or rear of the Parthenon, the procession in all probability separated into two, which went along both sides of the colonnade, and met again at the eastern door. Accordingly, over the western end, or rear, the first preparations of the procession are being made, which then starts along the north and south walls; the southern being chiefly occupied with the cavalcade of the Athenian knights, the northern with the carrying of sacred vessels, and leading of victims for the sacrifice. The frieze over the western door is still in its place; but, having lost its bright colouring, and being in any case at a great height, and only visible from close underneath, on account of the pillars and architrave in front, it produces no effect, and is hardly discernible. Indeed, it evidently was never more than an architectural ornament, in spite of all its artistic beauty.<sup>1</sup>

In its great days, and even when the antiquarian Pausanias saw it in the second century, nay, even when Alaric the Goth surveyed it in the fifth, the Acropolis was covered with statues, as well as with shrines. It was not merely the Holy of Holies first in Hellenic, then even in Christian times; it was also a museum and palace of art. At every step and turn the traveller met objects of veneration and of interest. There were still many archaic specimens, chiefly interesting to the antiquarian and the devotee, for since Hadrian's day the fashion of admiring the antique as such was as widespread as it is in modern Europe; there were still, in spite of the plundering of enemies and lovers of art, many of those masterpieces which commanded the common admiration of the artist and of the public. Even all the sides and slopes of the rock were honeycombed into sacred grottoes, with their altars and their gods, or studded with votive monuments. All these points of interest in their detail are gone. The sacred caves were for ages filled with rubbish, and desecrated with worse than neglect. And now that archæological interest has overcome the neglect of men, these ancient ornaments are defaced by the excavator, who, while he brings to light many treasures of history and of art, leaves the surface he has worked broken and defaced with hideous rubbish. There are left but the remnants of the surrounding wall, the marvellous array of archaic figures in the museum,

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies*, pp. 85, 89, 92.



and the ruins, already described, of the three principal buildings, which were the envy and the wonder of the civilised world.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Acropolis is a lesser hill, of which the name is even more familiar to the ordinary reader—the Areopagus. And sloping up against it, on another side, are the two theatres, that of Roman plan, due to Herodus Atticus in Hadrian's time, and that far more famous place where the tragedies and comedies of the great Greek masters were produced, the theatre of Dionysus—that is, sacred to the festivals of the god. Within sight of this latter are the colossal columns of the great Roman-Greek temple of Jupiter, remodelled and carried out by Hadrian; while within view of the Areopagus is that gem of Doric grace, the so-called temple of Theseus, contrasting in every way with the splendour of the Hellenistic conception of Hadrian and his architects. In the one, grace and symmetry, in the other, size and ornate majesty, were the ideal in view.

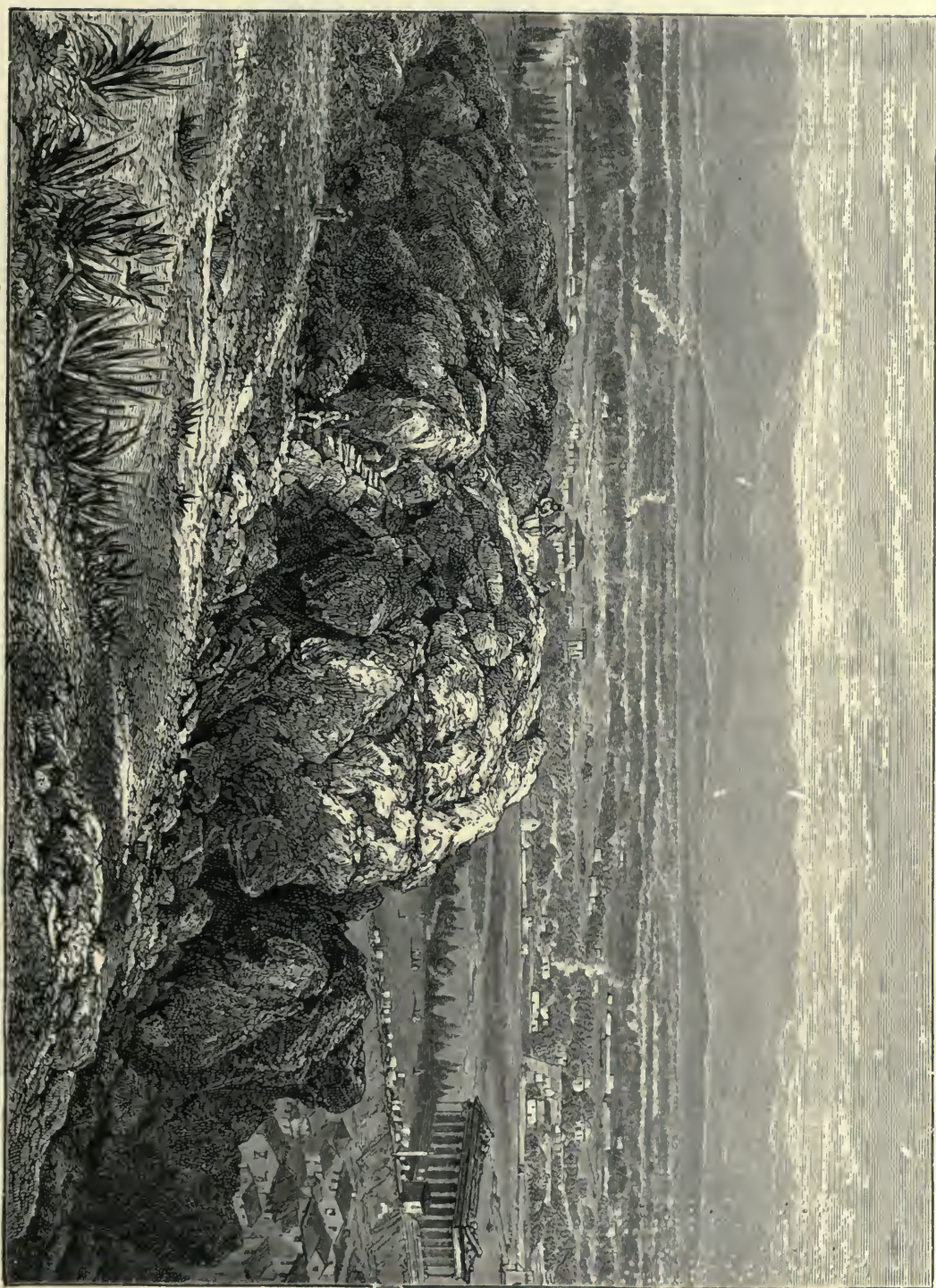
The Areopagus is now, as may be seen from the annexed cut, a bare rocky knoll, upon which evidences of old cutting show that it was smoothed for seats, and perhaps some wooden structure applied, to make the rude stones more comfortable. It was suitable to that antique and venerable court that the judges, especially when trying cases of blood-guiltiness, and of religious pollution, should have their sittings in the open air. This has, therefore, been a commonly adopted view of the working of this court, nor am I aware of any reason against it, save that so many of our preconceptions about Greek life turn out false.

Those who ascended from the Agora came first to a platform of considerable interest, upon which I will digress for a few moments. Plato makes Socrates say, in his famous *Defence*, that a copy of Anaxagoras, even when scarce, could be bought on the orchestra for a drachme, which represented three days' wages of an ordinary labourer in those days. I will now explain to the reader what this means. On the north-west slope of the Areopagus, and not far above the level of the market-place or old *Agora*, there is a small semicircular platform, backed by the rising rock.

'This, or some platform close to it, which may now be hidden by accumulated soil, was the old *orchestra*, possibly the site of the old theatre, but in historical times a sort of reserved platform, where the Athenians, who had their town bristling with statues, allowed no monument to be erected save the figures of Harmodius and Aristogiton, which were carried into Persia, replaced by others, afterwards recovered, and of which we may have a copy in the two fighting figures, of archaic character, now in the Museum of Naples. It was doubtless on this orchestra, just above the bustle and thoroughfare of the Agora, that booksellers kept their stalls, and here it was that the book of Anaxagoras could be bought for a drachme.

'Here then was the place where that physical philosophy was disseminated which first gained a few advanced thinkers; then, through Euripides, leavened





THE AREOPAGUS.





the drama, once the exponent of ancient piety ; then, through the stage, the Athenian public also, till we arrive at those Stoics and Epicureans who came to teach philosophy and religion, not as a faith but as a system, and to spend their time with the rest of the public in seeking out novelties of creed and of opinion, as mere fashions with which people chose to dress their minds. And it was on this very Areopagus, where we are now standing, that these philosophers of fashion came into contact with the thorough earnestness, the profound convictions, the red-hot zeal of the Apostle Paul. The memory of that great scene still lingers about the place, and every guide will show you the exact place where the apostle stood, and in what direction he addressed his audience. There are, I believe, even some respectable commentators who transfer their own estimate of St. Paul's importance to the Athenian public, and hold that it was before the *court* of the Areopagus that he was asked to expound his views. This is more than doubtful. The *blasés* philosophers who probably yawned over their own lectures, hearing of a new lay preacher, eager to teach and apparently convinced of the truth of what he said, thought the novelty too delicious to be neglected, and brought him forth-with out of the chatter and bustle of the crowd, probably past the very orchestra where Anaxagoras' books had been proselytising before him, and where the stiff old heroes of Athenian history stood, a monument of the escape from political slavery. It is even possible that the curious knot of idlers did not bring him higher than this platform, which might well be called part of Mars' Hill. But if they chose to bring him to the top, there was no hindrance, for the venerable court held its sittings in the open air, on stone seats ; and when not thus occupied, the top of the rock may well have been a convenient place of retirement for people who did not want to be disturbed by new acquaintances, and the constant eddies of new gossip in the market-place.

'It is, however, of far less import to know on what spot of the Areopagus Paul stood, than to understand clearly what he said, and how he sought to conciliate as well as to refute the philosophers who, no doubt, looked down upon him as an intellectual inferior. He starts naturally enough from the extraordinary crowd of votive statues and offerings, for which Athens was remarkable above all other cities of Greece. He says, with a slight touch of irony, that he finds them very religious indeed, so religious that he even found an altar to a god professedly *unknown*, or perhaps unknowable.<sup>1</sup> Probably St. Paul meant to pass from the latter sense of the word *ἄγνωστος*, which was, I fancy, what the inscription meant, to the former, which gave him an excellent introduction to his argument. Even the use of

<sup>1</sup> Though *ἄγνωστος* may surely have this meaning, I do not find it suggested in any of the commentaries on the passage. They all suppose some superstitious precaution, or else some case of the real inscription being effaced by time, and supplied in this way. The expression in Pausanias—the gods called unknown, *τοῖς ὀνομαζομένοις ἄγνώστοις*—seems to suggest it as a regular title, and we know that there were deities whose name was secret, and might not be pronounced. But in the face of so many better critics, I will not insist upon this interpretation.



the singular may have been an intentional variation from the strict text, for Pausanias twice over speaks of altars to the gods, who are called the *ἄγνωστοι* (or mysterious); but I cannot find any citation of the inscription in the singular form. However that may be, our Authorized Version does not preserve the neatness of St. Paul's point: "I find an altar," he says, "to an unknown god. Whom then ye unknowingly worship, Him I announce to you." But then he develops a conception of the great One God, not at all from the Jewish, but really from the Stoic point of view. He was preaching to Epicureans and to Stoics—to the advocates of prudence as the means, and pleasure as the end of a happy life, on the one hand; on the other to the advocates of duty, and of life in harmony with the Providence which governs the world for good. There could be no doubt to which side the apostle must incline. Though the Stoics of the market-place at Athens might be mere dilettanti, mere talkers about the *honestum*, and the great soul of the world, we know that this system of philosophy produced at Rome the most splendid constancy, the most heroic endurance—I had almost said the most Christian benevolence. It was this stern and earnest theory which attracted all serious minds in the decay of heathenism.

'Accordingly, St. Paul makes no secret of his sympathy with its noble features. He describes the God whom he preaches as the benevolent Author of the beauty and fruitfulness of Nature, the great Benefactor of mankind by His providence, and therefore not without constant and obtrusive witnesses of His greatness and His goodness. But he goes much farther, and treads close upon the Stoic pantheism when he not only asserts, in the words of Aratus, that we are His offspring, but that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being."'

'His first conclusion, that the Godhead should not be worshipped or even imaged in stone or in bronze, was no doubt quite in accordance with more enlightened Athenian philosophy. But it was when he proceeded to preach the Resurrection of the Dead, that even those who were attracted by him, and sympathised with him, turned away in contempt. The Epicureans thought death the end of all things. The Stoics thought that the human soul, the offspring—nay, rather an offshoot—of the Divine world-soul, would be absorbed into its parent essence. Neither could believe the assertion of St. Paul. When they first heard him talk of *Jesus* and *Anastasis*, they thought them some new and strange deities. But when they learned that Jesus was a man ordained by God to judge the world, and that *Anastasis* was merely the *Anastasis* of the dead, they were greatly disappointed; so some mocked, and some excused themselves from further listening.'

I will add but one point of interpretation concerning this famous chapter of the Acts. It is usual to criticise the Authorized Version, and say that St. Paul could not have meant at the outset of his speech to offend

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies*, p. 120, *et seq.*

the assembled philosophers by calling them *superstitious*. Accordingly the translation preferred is *very religious*. The objectors seem not to be aware that the word used by St. Paul, in a comparative or weaker form, is the very word, *Deisidæmon*, used for the title of a famous play of Menander, in which the principal character was a *Superstitious Man*. I think the Revised Version therefore rightly translates: 'Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are *somewhat superstitious*,' nor should it have given *religious* in the margin as an alternative.

These reflections lead us naturally to the consideration of the early history of Christianity in Athens, but we will postpone this interesting subject till we have done with classical and pagan Attica. As I said before, we have within our close view the very perfect and interesting Temple of Theseus. This, like so many other of the Athenian ruins, owes its present good condition to its transformation into a church, and so it remains to us, with its giant brother at Pæstum, the most complete example of that chaste and severe style. But, as is so common with our finest ruins, it is passed over in silence by our classical texts, or at least so vaguely is it noticed, that to the present day no one can tell by whom or when it was built, or to what god or hero it was really dedicated. The subjects treated in the extant sculptures point as much to the worship of Herakles as of Theseus; the peculiarities of its building—for these temples, like the mediæval Gothic churches, though all very similar, are yet all original and peculiar in some features—point to a date earlier than the more graceful and perfect Parthenon. But then the builders of that day were quite capable of doing an archaic piece of work by way of variety—we know that Ictinus did so at Bassæ—and for that reason our inference from its severer lines to its greater antiquity is not quite safe.

We pass from this side of the Acropolis to the south-east, and proceed to say a word upon the great theatre of Dionysus. But we pass on the way the lesser theatre of Herodus Atticus, which supplies us with an excellent specimen of the Roman theatre, contrasted in many respects with the Greek. It is far steeper, and built up at the back of the stage with stories of brickwork arcades; the stage walls are joined to the semicircle of the spectators' seats, instead of leaving open side entrances for the chorus to enter the orchestra. The effect of the whole building is cold and gloomy, oppressive with its high walls, and quite different in its effect from that of all the sunny cheerful relics of the bright Hellenic spirit. There had once been on or near this side a famous circular-roofed building for concerts, called the *Odeum*, and built in the days of Pericles. How far more precious would have been any relic of this perfect epoch!

As we wander on we come to the now unearthed foundations of the temple of Æsculapius, which was apparently, unlike the rest, deliberately destroyed by the Christians in the fifth century, because this god specially



posed as the saviour of men from disease and death, and was specially credited with many miracles of healing. But here there is nothing of more than antiquarian interest; we naturally hurry on to where the pickaxe has recovered for us, though not till 1862, something tangible and easy to be understood—the very interesting remains of the famous theatre in which the Athenians received the higher and better part of their moral teaching. This is a point never to be forgotten by those in whom Puritan traditions have sown a wholesome dread of the modern stage and its surroundings. It is indeed true that all serious dramatists, even in modern days, have asserted themselves as moral teachers, and so have the better and greater novelists, who have succeeded to the work and popularity of the playwrights. But the accessories of the drama have been so unworthy of this mission; actors as a class have been, since the days of Aristotle, so generally loose and reckless in their lives, that we cannot wonder at the strong prejudice subsisting among the graver classes against this form of so-called public teaching. There was no question about this when Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides composed in rivalry pieces to be acted in honour of the gods, and for the benefit of the great imperial democracy of Athens. For, in the first place, they represented no vulgar everyday griefs or misfortunes, but those of great legendary heroes and heroines far removed from their own days; in the second, they uniformly represented the triumph of virtue and greatness over cruelty and vice, not in the vulgar form of earthly rewards and earthly happiness, but in that nobler triumph which wins the sympathy of men, and proclaims the victory of human weakness even against all the successes of tyranny, the ‘green bay tree’ flourishing of the bad, the apparent succumbing in death of the hero, who conquers in the supremacy of his will while he resigns his life to the stress of evil fortune.

There is yet another point in this old Greek tragedy of no mean importance. On the Attic stage the poets were allowed to criticise or rehandle the myths attributing immoralities to the gods. If these stories were so firmly based in popular belief that they could not be contorted into virtue, the poets at least criticised them openly in the mouth of their chorus, or of those who suffered by such injustice, and so the habit was engendered—so vital among nations not enlightened as we are—of trusting to conscience rather than to traditional theology, of putting the moral sense of a civilised society above the superstitious observances and beliefs of a pagan priesthood. It was in this sense, as St. Paul says, that the Gentiles ‘became a law to themselves, when they which have no [Divine] law, do by nature the things of the law, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.’ Here is this inspired truth in the words of Sophocles<sup>1</sup>: ‘May it be my lot to observe strict holiness in every

<sup>1</sup> *Œdipus Rex*, vv. 863, 899.

word and deed—holiness whose august laws are proclaimed from their birth-place far above the earth, for Heaven alone, and no mortal race of men, hath begotten them, nor will oblivion ever lull them to sleep. Great is the Divine Spirit in them, and of eternal youth.' These words are quoted from a famous drama which illustrates the awful fact that an early crime, perhaps in its inception the result of mere neglect of Divine warnings, or the ebullition of a hasty temper, may so grow in its hideous consequences as to mar the whole future of a splendid life, and turn the highest public spirit and self-sacrifice into a national calamity.<sup>1</sup>

But I must dwell upon another feature in Greek, and in many ancient religions, which explains from another side how this kind of entertainment—for we cannot deny that it was also such—was consistent with the high moral objects which I have just explained. It is only with the rise of asceticism, with the growth of a hatred and suspicion of the flesh as opposed to the spirit, with a deep sense of the guiltiness of sin and the terrors of Divine wrath, that religion has again become what it was to primitive men, a doctrine of sadness and of fear. All the insistence of the New Testament writers upon the deep satisfactions, the pure joys of the Gospel have not been able to cure it of its sadness, its profound conviction of the innate depravity of the human heart, of the sinfulness of earthly delights, in fact, of the sense of sin as necessarily adhering to the flesh and all its desires. But the days of old were days when religion was a matter not of fasting, but of feasting; not of continence, but of indulgence; not of contrition, but of hilarity; when men came together to worship their gods by inviting them to share in human pleasures. Such feasts as those of the yule log and of the harvest home have been now amalgamated with our religion, but they stand out as rather isolated among our Christian feasts, in that they retain a certain pagan complexion of jollity.

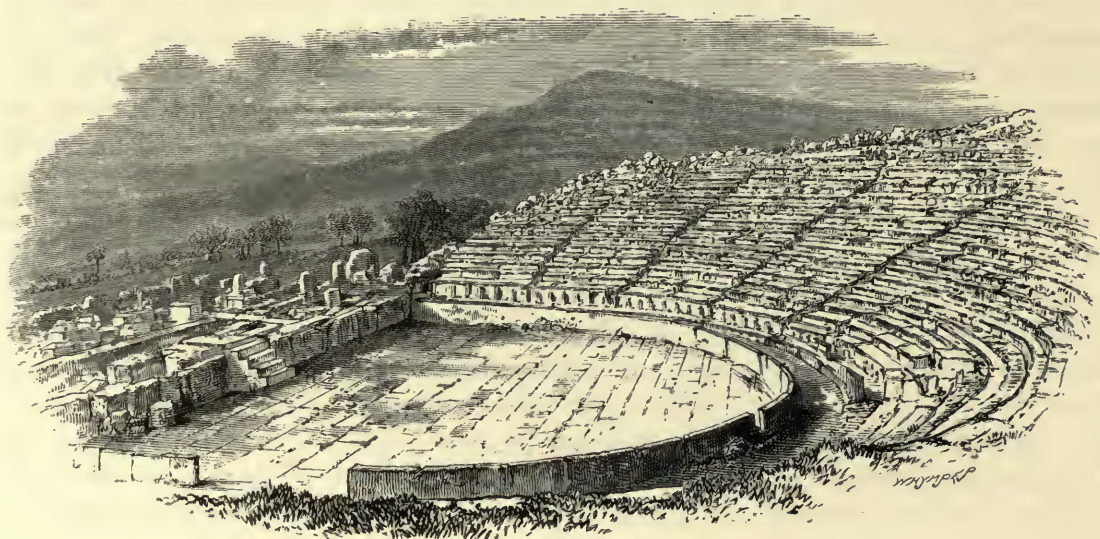
The Greek religion was essentially a religion of joy, and no worship of the gods would have been considered acceptable by the public, if gloomy faces, or sad anticipations, were not banished. Thus it was that the Athenian State thought it just to apply the public funds to give every free citizen a day's wages, in order that he might be able to enjoy himself at the dramas produced as part of the festival of the god Dionysus. Thus there were combined in the Attic tragic and comic drama, moral improvement, political instruction, and religious enjoyment in a manner very hard to appreciate without long and careful study of old Greek life. We cannot therefore consider the moral aspects of Shakspeare's plays, or the persistent attempts made in our own day to raise the tone of the theatre, as in any sense close analogies to the work of the tragedians of Athens, who may be regarded as established ministers of the national religion.

These considerations will lend interest to the remains of the Dionysiac

<sup>1</sup> The reader should consult what I have said in the first volume of my *Greek Literature*, p. 297, *seq.*



theatre even with those who take no interest in modern theatrical performances. They will notice immediately many contrasts to our modern play-houses. The building was not covered, but open to the weather, as it indeed must have been from its vast size. For though the pedants have ridiculously misunderstood a passage in Plato's *Symposium*, which says that the tragic poet speaks to thirty thousand Athenians—meaning thereby the whole population who go there at various times—and have assumed that this number actually assembled within the enclosure to hear human voices, the recent measurements Dr. Dörpfeld made for me on his plan showed that perhaps twelve to fifteen thousand people could have found room at a performance; if so, the majority only saw the show, and did not hear the dialogue.



THE THEATRE OF DIONYSUS AT ATHENS.

Again, what we call the pit was always empty. As it now remains it is handsomely paved, and was reserved at first for the dancing of the chorus, for which it was justly called the dancing place or *orchestra*. The modern orchestra in our theatres therefore only occupies a small slice of the room given to the old chorus, for their singing and dancing, together with the musical accompaniments. But the considerable height of the stage—ten or twelve feet above this level—indicates that if the chorus were sometimes to occupy a place on the stage, as we may infer from extant plays, they must have been raised on a wooden platform, and so brought within easy reach of the actors by ascending perhaps a single step. There appears to have been such an arrangement, called the *thymelé*, covering or surrounding an altar of Dionysus, which reminded the audience of the religious origin of the whole performance. The row of upright slabs running round this open pit or orchestra seems to have been a late addition, and I fear the theory is

correct, that when the Athenians, out of flattery to the Romans, brought in the fashion of having gladiatorial combats, this arrangement was made to prevent the combatants from falling back to the front row of seats, and soiling the occupants with their blood. This front row consisted mainly of marble arm-chairs, with the names of religious officials inscribed upon them, which show that even in Roman days the whole ceremony was regarded as a festival to the gods. These front seats corresponded to the stalls in our cathedrals. The rest of the house was all let at the same price—



STALLS IN THE THEATRE AT ATHENS.

two obols per seat; nor would the Athenians have tolerated such a thing as reserving seats for higher fees. Such reservations were always purely honorary.

But I cannot dwell long upon this fascinating subject. Let us wander on to where the Roman Emperor Hadrian has left his distinctive mark upon Athens, by rebuilding the temple long since begun by the early tyrants, but never finished, in the pompous Corinthian style which marks his constructions from Spain to Palmyra. The whole world is full of these majestic remains.

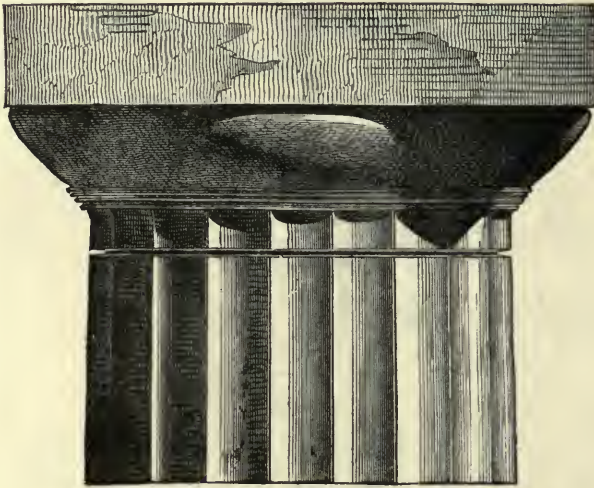


Baalbec and the little known Gerasa are, with Palmyra, evidences of this epoch in remote Syria. Tambessa in Southern Algiers, our Scottish border, the towns of Provence, the aqueducts in Spain, all attest his lavish magnifi-

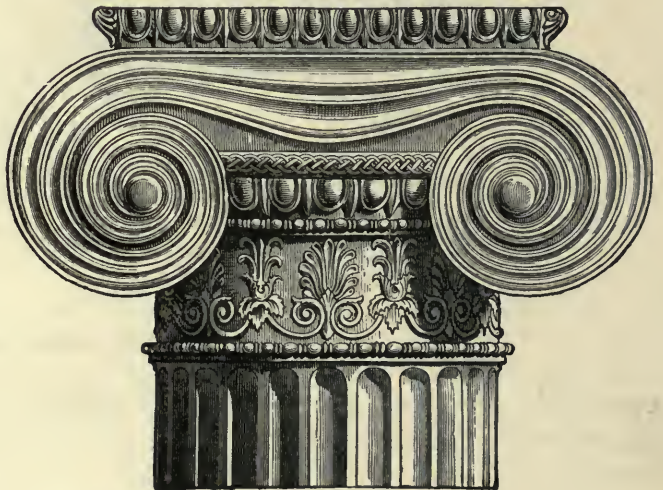
cence in building. At Athens alone the majestic splendour of the ruins of his temple fade into insignificance beside the calm dignity of the Parthenon. Were these columns anywhere else, they would indeed command the unqualified admiration of men. And no doubt Hadrian himself thought he had completely outdone the work of Ictinus and Phidias.

I will only note here for the reader's benefit that the Corinthian pillar and capital so universal in Roman and Renaissance architecture were very

rare in pure Greek building till the days of Alexander. The first building in that style which we know is the monument of Lysicrates, set up at the time the young conqueror was on his way into Asia; other specimens of this sort of capital are isolated and doubtful. Nor can we question the taste of the Greeks in applying it in this first instance to a small and very ornamental building, not to great massive temples like that of Hadrian now before us. We do not know that there is any truth in the stories which connect this ornamental development with Corinth; but it became almost universal with the Roman dominion, and even in the scanty remains of Indo-Greek art preserved at the Museum of Lahore, we find that this beautiful decoration captivated the Oriental taste, and was applied by them in the second century B.C. I give the really Greek orders, the Doric and Ionic, as reminders to the reader, in the adjoining cuts.



DORIC CAPITAL AND PART OF SHAFT.



IONIC CAPITAL WITH SHAFT.





RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER OLYMPIUS (LOOKING EAST).





We paused in our sketch of Athenian history at the perfect development of Athenian genius, both political and artistic, in the middle of the fifth century B.C. She was then the acknowledged head of the Greek, and therefore of the civilised world, and in the wonderful fifty years between the end of the Persian and the commencement of the Peloponnesian wars, she had attained perfection in almost every department of human glory. Perhaps in painting only, and in instrumental music, certainly in eloquence, some advances may have been made by later ingenuity; but in sculpture and architecture, as well as in poetry, the climax had been reached. Still there was development and variation, if not improvement, and if the pediments of Phidias have left no rival, we may also assert that the Hermes of Praxiteles, the jewel of the Olympian excavations, is also beautiful beyond compare.

The jealousy excited by Athens, and the harshness of her rule over her subjects, brought on the tedious and disastrous Peloponnesian war, during which Athens showed surprising energy and endurance, keeping up her artistic glories, her architecture, her splendid tragedies and comedies while she was contending with her foes from the Euxine to the Sicilian sea. Yet the end came with Lysander, when she lost her imperial power and grandeur in war, though she presently recovered her liberty, and assumed again a very widely acknowledged supremacy in letters and in art. But great public enterprises gave way to more individual or private productions; even dramatic poetry, which required public outlay and perfect freedom of criticism, passed out of fashion, to make way for the comedy of manners, which corresponds to our novel-literature, and philosophy, which, except in Plato's hands, cannot be classed among the fine arts. But while scene painting had suggested a study of the laws of perspective, and led the way to landscape painting, sculpture, in the hands of Scopas and Praxiteles, attempted more expression, new phases of character, and individual beauty such as had hardly been thought of by Phidias. The naked athlete had been represented by many older sculptors, the naked goddess was a daring venture, at which the more religious Attic school would have been shocked.

The glory of Greek art in the fourth century is to have produced Plato and Demosthenes, with their satellites, Zeuxis and Euphranor in painting, and to have held the torch aloft for Lysippus the sculptor, and Apelles the painter, both of whom were court artists to Alexander the Great, and therefore mark a new social phase of art; but both of whom distinctly developed their respective arts by greater expression, a new ideal of beauty, and more complete control of the materials at their command. These great masters lead us into the Hellenistic or post-Alexandrian epoch, in which naturally the chief glory departed from Athens, to settle in Alexandria, Antioch, Pergamum, and Rhodes, each the centre of a great and rich display of the fine arts, as they were understood and prized by these less pure and less fastidious Greeks.



This, then, was perhaps the least prominent time for Athens, when her political power was gone, and she had not yet come under the sentimental favour of the Romans. For though every successor of Alexander felt honoured by the friendship of Athens, and her decrees of honour inscribed on marble

slabs were a sort of patent of nobility, which were strangely persistent in value, despite their prostitution to purposes of political chicanery and public mendicancy, though a Ptolemy or an Attalus thought it a high honour to set up a marble or build a school for the city of the philosophers, still the flattery of Hellenistic kings was not so indiscriminate and lucrative as the flattery with which the Romans adopted everything Athenian as the model of good taste. Hence arose a school of sculpture intended for the Roman market, not without great merits, as the extant boxer of Pasiteles, and the famous Venus found at Milo, which dates from about 200 B.C., amply testify.

But I need hardly remind the reader that from the days of Alexander, Athens, as a political power, was of no account. She possessed a very important and strongly fortified harbour, the possession of which gave strategic advantages to any sovran; she rose up to assert her liberty, once and again, till the obscure Chremonidean war against the power of Antigonos Gonatas of Macedon about 260 B.C. But it was her schools of philosophy, her palaces and museums of art—for temples were now treated as such—her famous groups of marble and bronze in all her streets, which gave her a prestige which com-



DEMOSTHENES.

manded the indulgence of all her conquerors. Presently the Romans, when they came as conquerors into Greece, according to Horace's hackneyed phrase, were themselves led captive. They affected to speak Greek, to eat Greek dinners, and have their sons educated at the schools of Athens. Thus many Roman nobles sought to obtain a reputation for culture by building

some monument in or near Athens. An Appius Claudius built a second portico or gateway within the main approach to the temple at Eleusis, and Cicero, in one of his letters, proposes to emulate this example. Many doles of corn and money were given by wealthy Roman sojourners, and the city flourished upon its foreign students, its tourists, and its casual benefactors—a city of schoolmasters and beggars, till the days when Hadrian and Herodes Atticus filled it with great public buildings and added a new quarter to the city. There is perhaps more building of this age in Athens and Attica than of all the other periods put together. Most of the great theatre, and its lesser neighbour, the great temple of Zeus, the splendid Doric gateway to the Eleusinian temple, nay that temple itself, the Tower of the Winds in the city, and many more porticoes and temples, date from these days of Roman favour.

This brings us to the period of the Antonines, when the world was apparently at peace and happy, and yet was big with the coming change. St. Paul had long since preached his discourse on the Areopagus; he had written his general letters to the Church of Greece, represented by Corinth, the leading city in Roman Greece. But for all that Athens still remained thoroughly pagan. Dionysius the Areopagite, and the woman named Damaris, however legend was afterwards busy with them, were no Church, and obtained no following. At Athens, if anywhere, the Gospel of Christ remained to the Greeks foolishness. Young men came in crowds to learn the current wisdom of the pagan world—Stoicism, Epicureanism, the Eclecticism of the new Academy, the archaicism of old Ionic theosophy—and the city lived upon this trade. It was as much a trade as the selling of the silver images of Diana at Ephesus, though of course it really contributed to the culture of the world. But the Athenians were not going to abandon this most venerable and profitable paganism for the upstart faith, with its novelties and its privations. And so while Christian communities were early formed at Antioch and Alexandria, at Rome and Corinth, at Ephesus and at Thessalonica, Athens was obdurate. Not even Constantine, with his declaration of Christianity as the religion of the Empire, not even Theodosius, with his closing of the Olympic Games (393 A.D.), were able to subjugate the old spirit in Athens. It was kept alive not only by reactions like that of Julian, but by the persistence of the schools, the presence of the triumphal monuments of the old religion, and the want of thorough proselytising, for which the Byzantine Emperors had no leisure. It was Justinian, with his all-embracing despotism, who closed the schools (529 A.D.) and so put an end at least to the professed paganism of this great centre and rallying-point. Whether he indeed extirpated the old spirit is another question, to which we may revert when we consider the Christianity of the city of Athens. It was probably on account of her acknowledged pre-eminence as a centre of higher education, that Athens held fast so long to her pagan



schools and their effete creed. Little as the Sophists of the post-Christian centuries believed in this mythology, they could not face the problem of recasting the whole of their system; just as our schoolmasters now-a-days who know the evils of the competitive system, stand aghast if we seriously propose its abolition.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to the traveller that all the collected wealth of antiquities at Athens is distributed into various museums, and not gathered into a bewildering mass, like our British Museum. The distances between these smaller arrays are short, and in any case the intelligent student must consider them at various times. This principle may be carried too far, as, for example, when the Greeks insist on having a little local



ATTIC POTTERY.

museum for every chief town of every province, to which access is difficult, and where very precious things, being often in the charge of poor and ignorant officials, may sometimes become the prey of ardent and unscrupulous visitors, or else be allowed to suffer from damp and exposure. The right mean must be found and observed in this as in other matters of taste. I suppose no one will dispute that the things found on the Acropolis are better kept there, where they are perfectly distinct and determined, than if they were carried down to the fine central museum, whose halls, indeed, still look rather bare and waiting for their furniture. But my general experience through Europe, especially in Germany and France, as well as in England, is that centralization in art collections has become excessive, and injures the instructiveness of this kind of exhibition.

I have already said so much about the early or archaic things, that I will add but little here on that most interesting side of the Attic museums. It is possible now, especially in the figures of Apollo, to trace the gradual emancipation of the old artists from childish stiffness and conventional ornament to the perfect imitation of ideal forms. It can thus best be shown that whatever first suggestions this wonderful people received from Oriental or Egyptian sources, and few will deny some such influences, the development of Greek art from its cradle was indigenous, and due to home genius. From the perfect or classical period—that of Myron, Polyclitus, Phidias, Scopas, Praxiteles—there is very little in the museums, except the remains of the Parthenon. Some of the slabs of the famous frieze are not in London, but still at Athens, where bad plaster copies of Lord Elgin's spoils are set up to show the general plan of the whole composition. A few battered fragments of the best epoch, some headless trunks, or trunkless heads, always with the nose missing, are all that the visitor can find of what he most longs to see. But there are some inferior copies of the Athene of the Parthenon, which give us the design of that great figure; there are precious inscriptions, one of which even leads us to verify Thucydides, and shows that that immaculate and impeccable historian was very loose indeed in his transcripts; and there are reliefs, especially tomb reliefs, beginning with very archaic specimens, from the date of the battle of Marathon and reaching down to Roman days.

These Attic tomb reliefs are perhaps quite as distinctive a feature as anything at Athens. Some of them are still where they were found, in the old Cerameicus, or western suburb of Athens, near the present railway station. But most of them are in the principal museum. They vary greatly in merit, from the very best to what is coarse and debased, but the whole impression they produce is one of great respect for the good feeling and delicacy of the regrets which they convey.

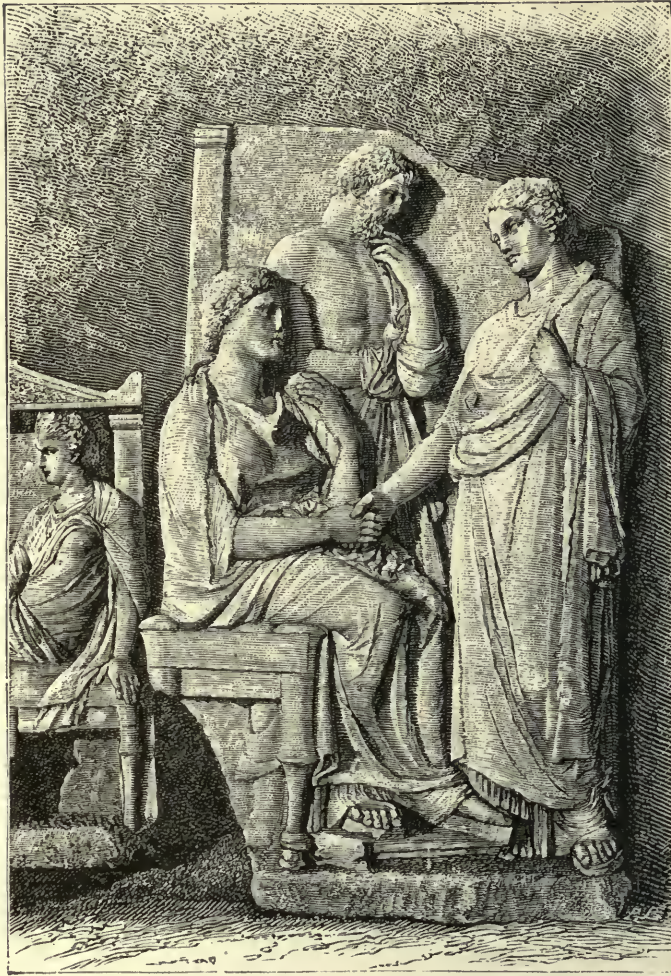
It is plain, from the evidence of their poets, that the Greeks must have looked upon the death of those they loved with unmixed sorrow. It was the final parting, when all the good and pleasant things are remembered; when men seek, as it were, to increase the pang, by clothing the dead in



AN ATTIC TOMB RELIEF.



all his sweetest and dearest presence. But this was not done by pompous inscriptions, nor by a vain enumeration of all the deceased had performed—inscriptions which, among us, tell more of the vanity than of the grief of the survivors. The commonest epitaph was a simple *χαῖρε*, or farewell, and it is this single word, so full and deep in its meaning to those who love, which is pictured in the tomb reliefs. They are simple parting scenes, expressing the grief of the survivors, and the great sadness of the sufferer, who is going to his long home.



FUNERAL TABLET FROM THE CERAMEICUS, ATHENS.

But what strikes us most forcibly in these remarkable monuments is the chastened, modest expression of sorrow which they display. There is no violence, no despair, no extravagance—all is simple and noble; thus combining purity of art with a far deeper pathos—a far nobler grief—than the exaggerated paintings and sculptures which seek to express mourning in later and less cultivated ages. We may defy any art to produce truer or more poignant pictures of real sorrow—a sorrow, as I have explained, far deeper and more hopeless than any Christian sorrow; and yet there is no wringing of hands, no swooning, no defacing with sackcloth and ashes.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, indeed,

as in the celebrated tomb of Dexileos, a mere portrait of the dead in active life was put upon his tomb, and private grief would not assert itself in presence of the record of his public services.

Let me now turn to a far less affecting, but not the less a very

<sup>1</sup> I did, indeed, see one relief at Athens, in which the relatives are represented as rushing forward in agony, as it were, to delay the departure of the fainting figure. It is right that this exception should be noted, as it shows that they understood what violent grief was, and yet as a rule avoided representing it.



interesting relic of these tombs, I mean those little terra-cotta figures, which are found not only in Attica, but in far greater numbers at the necropolis of Tanagra in Bœotia, and indeed in most old Greek cemeteries in Cyrene, Rhodes, Greece, and Asia Minor. These figurines are, like the tomb reliefs, of very various merit, a really well-modelled one being very rare, and of a very great market value, so much so that they are now frequently counterfeited. They were evidently to be found in every house as children's toys or as ornaments, and the making of them was a recognised trade with a definite name (*κοροπλάθος*). Nobody can tell why they are so frequently found in tombs, for these tombs are surely not all those of children, and we do not see any possibility of a religious significance in them. The fact remains that these graceful little figures, or groups of two figures, were produced from the time of Plato onward, perhaps earlier, but in most of our examples not reaching back further than the third century. But we have no certain clue to their dates.

What will surprise the unlearned spectator most is to find that the costume of the women in these figures, which, by the way, often retain the colouring lost on the statues, differs much from the draping of the goddesses and heroines, and approaches closely to what we should call modern costume. The dressing of the hair and the shady hats are quite what an elegant woman in the nineteenth century would adopt. This striking contrast, in which we may be perfectly sure that the terra-cotta figurines express actual life, shows how very ideal and conventional were the types and figures representing the gods. It is often complained that the Greek gods were purely anthropomorphic, that they made their Divinities



MUFFLED FIGURE, TANAGRA.

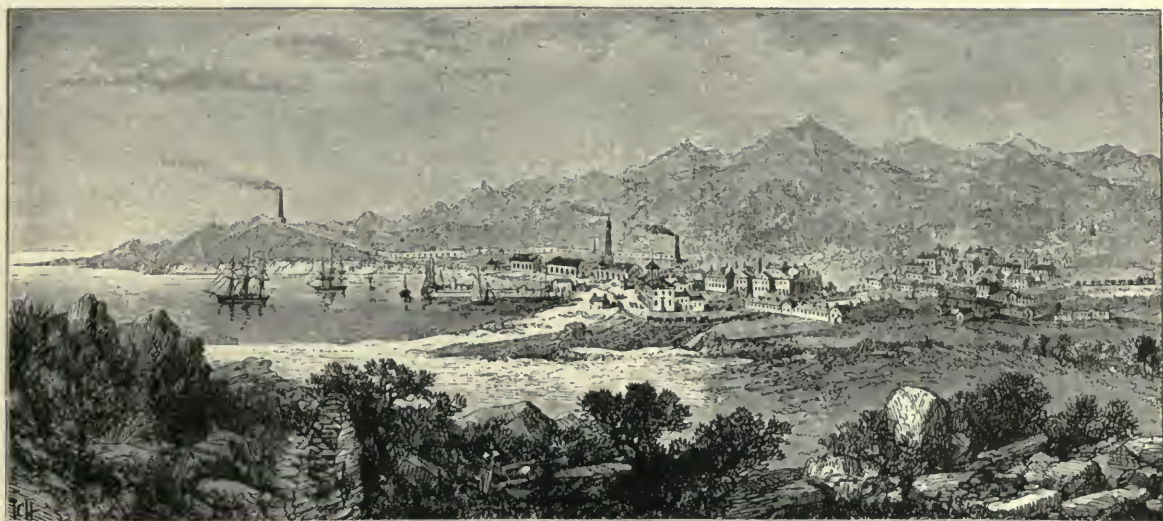


mere human beings with passions like themselves. This is indeed generally true, but if we consider the huge differences between the types of ladies in the figurines and of goddesses in the statues, we can well conceive that the gods, though of human shape, may have been felt very remote from ordinary life, and of so exalted a type as to preclude all physical comparison. I say this not in defence, but in mitigation of Greek idolatry.

We may be sure that the use of these small ornaments and toys increased in the period when the Athenians had laid aside epic and tragic tastes, and were content with genteel comedy and ordinary life. Just as poetry went through all its greater phases, to end with the trifling elegy and smart epigram, so the plastic arts decayed, and mere household or personal ornaments represented the art of the nation. We find, indeed, at Athens numerous rude portrait statues of Romans; donations, perhaps, or flattering acknowledgments in the days of Athenian beggary, set up to some Italian benefactor. We know that such men as Herod and Attalus I., as well as the Ptolemies, set up large porticoes, or temples, or rows of statues, in Greek cities. But the Greeks themselves only produced here and there a school of sculpture which worked for Roman patrons; for the rest they were content to admire the accumulated wealth of their former greatness.



ANCIENT GREEK METHODS OF DRESSING THE HAIR. (FROM THE TANAGRA FIGURINES.)



THE LAURIUM SILVER MINES IN GREECE.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHRISTIAN ATHENS.

IT is not till yesterday that the smallest interest has arisen among the cultivated public for the Christian remains at Athens. An occasional enthusiast indeed spoke of Byzantine churches and the relics of Frankish knights, but not even the fact that Shakspeare laid the scene of a romantic play at Athens, and gave a mediæval title to the hero, Theseus, could wake any general interest in the city from which the pagan gods had departed. When I first visited Greece in 1875, not only did no one regret the many ancient churches which had been taken down to give materials for the hideous new cathedral, but there was serious talk of pulling down the old Church of Kapnikaræa because it stood in the middle of Hermes Street, and so far obstructed the thoroughfare that the road went round it on either side. Up to yesterday not a thought was spent on these things, and all the dominations of Franks, Venetians, Turks, were lumped together into the period of decay and ruin, when nothing was worth studying about the place.

Happily things are now rapidly changing. The presence at the English school of M. Schultz, a competent architect and artist, who devotes his time to this stratum of Attic remains, and that of M. Streckowski at the German school, who is likewise learned in the mediæval side of Greek art, have awakened even the modern Greeks, so that a new field of interest, a new field of research, has been added to all those already existing in that marvellous land. The Church of Arta, the Phæneromene at Salamis, the



monastery of Daphne, the ruins of Mistra, are now favourite places to visit, and to admire. The larger histories of Finlay and Hopf on Mediæval Greece are being supplemented by special books, like Gregorovius' recent *History of Athens in the Middle Ages*, while fine books on the Byzantine art of Salonica, Trebizond, Constantinople, and Mount Athos, are disclosing to the intelligent traveller what he will find to admire in districts till now only visited for sport or adventure.

When Christianity at last triumphed in this pagan Holy of Holies, the new religion seems to have been most eager to reconsecrate every spot once dedicated to an idol for the purposes of Christian worship. Some few shrines, such as the temple of Asclepius, who had posed as the saviour of men, were deliberately destroyed; but elsewhere the old temples were transformed into churches or chapels with very little alteration. It is to this that we owe the preservation of the Parthenon, Erechtheum, and Temple of Theseus. But in a hundred other cases Athens was filled with tiny chapels on every spot where an idol had been set up, so that the proportion of church room was vastly in excess of any possible congregation.

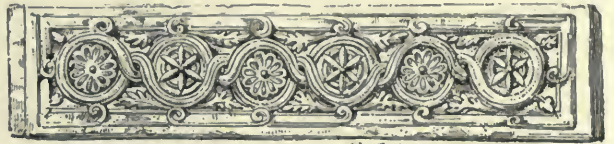
When I was in Salonica in the spring of 1889, new discoveries of small Byzantine chapels in various parts of the town had led the local antiquarians to the theory that rich citizens got private chapels built for themselves. It seems to me that the feeling I have just explained gives us the real solution. The new Creed was afraid to leave any spot once hallowed with the old associations untouched and unconverted, and so these shrines, in which perhaps service was but seldom held, were merely meant to occupy the ground claimed from the expelled deities.

Together with this complete change of external religion (even when old beliefs still lingered), comes at last a partial change of population. Hordes of Slavic tribes, ever since the first great invasion of Alaric (395 A.D.), had made their way into Greece, and settled in many places. It was once a popular theory of Fallmerayer, a good deal favoured by Finlay in his later and disappointed days, when his personal differences with the new Greek Government led him to attribute to them faults of heredity which he had thought foreign to the ideal Greeks for whom he spent his life, that these Slavonic inroads, lasting for several centuries, gradually replaced the old population, so that what we now have before us is a Slavonic nation, speaking Greek, and posing as the descendants of our old teachers and masters, the Hellenes.

This theory, which though overdriven, had considerable facts to support it, has now been reduced to its proper limits. It is certain that the cities at least were not Slavised, and that the tenacious culture of the old Greeks was able to conquer and assimilate these foreign elements. There are many such cases known to history, not indeed always where the higher and better elements prevailed. Thus in our own day, or least our own century, there

were no more rowdy or improvident Irishmen than the Galway squires, who show by their English names that they were descended from English settlers not very long ago. The city of Dublin has been settled and inhabited by Danes (Northmen) and English for centuries, and has even lost all the use of its old language, and yet will anyone entering that city deny that it is a thoroughly Irish town? The invaded people, if not formally extirpated, of which we know no historical examples, always remain the majority, and reassert themselves in national characteristics, as soon as intermarriages and other intercourse bring the victorious minority into close contact with the established habits of their new home—habits based upon the climate and other requirements of the country. Even the victorious Alaric seems to have been so impressed with the civilisation of Athens, that he spared her monuments as well as her religion; and it is not a little remarkable, as has been noted by the historian Gregorovius, that it was the pagan gods and their splendour which saved Athens, while Rome was protected from the same barbarian conqueror by its Christian bishop.

The city of Athens suffered far more at the hands of Christian emperors carrying away its treasures to set up at Constantinople than from barbarian invaders. But it is indeed strange and affecting how at this period of the Christianisation of Greece, her noblest statues disappear, with hardly a word of notice. Many of them, such as the great statues of Athene in and beside the Parthenon, vanish in silence. I take the new barbarian or Slavonic elements in the Greek nation to have aided in both these results—in the more easy reception of Christianity, to which their traditions offered no firm resistance, as well as in the growing carelessness and ignorance of the artistic value of the discarded images of the deposed gods. Fortunately the invading Huns and



DETAILS OF BYZANTINE CHURCH ORNAMENTATION.



Vandals, as well as most of the Goths, passed by the Greek peninsula to seek homes or plunder further west, and so the light of culture in the former died a natural, and therefore a slower death. The edict of Justinian made so little noise, that its very existence is now doubted by many authorities.<sup>1</sup>

This slow and gradual decay, together with the resetting of all the temples with Christian emblems without revolution or bloodshed, is probably the main reason why the history of early Christian Athens with its new Byzantine architecture is shrouded in impenetrable mist. There is a *Liber Pontificalis*, preserving with care the history of the analogous changes at Rome; at Athens not even the list of the early Christian bishops has been preserved, except in the unsupported legend that the series began with St. Paul's convert, Dionysius the Areopagite. As regards the churches actually built, and not set up in accommodated heathen temples, the best architects will not refer them to the early date of such churches as St. Sophia, or St. George of Salonica. The mere rotunda, with its flat and stumpy cupola, as seen in the latter church, is replaced by a richer design, and the multiplied cupolas are taller in proportion to the building. But as regards these churches, there exists extraordinary variation in the several modern descriptions of Athens. While one ascribes the oldest of them to the fourth century, another speaks of them as dating from the twelfth. Such variations only show how little progress has been made in the general understanding of Byzantine architecture. They would be impossible and absurd as regards either Greek, classical, or Gothic structures.<sup>2</sup>

In a book intended for Christian readers I shall be expected to give special attention to this hitherto neglected side of Greece, and will not apologise for keeping them for a few pages from the topics which, perhaps, they consider so essential to a book upon Greece, that any parenthesis is somewhat resented. Still, in face of the frequent proposals to unite the Protestant Church of England with the old Orthodox Church of Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, it cannot be without importance to hear what is the condition as to churches and ritual of the Orthodox Church. I will even in due time take the reader beyond the limits of the kingdom to the heart and centre of that church, the famous promontory of Mount Athos, where we may best study the *religion* of that branch of Christianity. Indeed, the recent journey I made to that seat of learning and asceticism was specially intended to obtain information on this very important question of international ecclesiastical policy.

It is very remarkable that among all the various nationalities which gained a place upon the Byzantine throne, we do not find a single Athenian,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the question discussed in Gregorovius' *Athens*, I., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> The very practical and accurate guide-book, written for Bædeker by my friend Dr. Lolling, is almost silent on this department of Attic antiquities, and prudently avoids all mention of specific dates.

nor do the Middle Ages afford us the name of a single eminent man from that former hotbed of intellectual greatness. On the other hand, three Athenian ladies attained the dignity of empress—Athenais, daughter of the philosopher Leontius, who became the empress of Theodosius II., under the name of Eudocia (421 A.D.); Irene, married to Leo IV. (before his accession) in 770, and Theophan, taken from her former husband and married in 807 to the Cæsar Staurakios, the co-regent of Nikephoros. The last-named had



THE CHURCH OF ST. THEODORE AT ATHENS.

but a short time of greatness, and disappeared after two years into a convent. But the former two were great people in their day—the first in obtaining relief from State burdens for her oppressed country, but unable to stem the tide of the new faith, which she was compelled to adopt at her marriage, and to which she was by heredity opposed. Indeed, the legends attribute to her—no doubt falsely—the building of twelve churches in newly-Christianised Athens. Irene comes in the time of the great conflict about images, that conflict now represented by the divergence between the Puritan



and the Catholic ideal, and she, like her forerunner Athenais, was obliged to abjure her old convictions in favour of images, learned under the shadow of the Parthenon, for the reformed faith. The death of her weak husband in 780 left her practically empress, and then she was supported in her ambition by the image-party, for whom she broke her solemn abjuration. Her machinations, always instinct with a deep interest for her old country, where she subdued Slavic invaders and built churches, and the vicissitudes of her life, ranging from her proposed marriage with Charlemagne to her exile and death at Lesbos, make her quite one of the most striking female figures in the Middle Ages. The Church was not ashamed to reckon this adventuress—who murdered her own son—among its saints; it was her reward for recovering the right to set up images in churches, which her influence carried at the seventh Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, in 787 A.D. I saw at the great convent of Lavra, on Mount Athos, an entry in the huge Byzantine handwriting of that day, commemorating her benevolences to the monks. I do not think the text implied any visit to that seat of piety.

As three Athenian ladies ascended the throne of the Eastern Cæsars, so three emperors in these early days are known to have visited Athens—Zeno, the Isaurian, in 486, Constans II., in 662, and Basil II., in 1014. The first visit excited no comment, and is merely to be inferred from other facts; the second and third, made by the emperors either at the opening or the close of a great campaign, were great events in their day. Constans found Athens formally under the new faith; but many must have been the suggestions of paganism in the remaining monuments and the old superstitions of the people. Nothing seems to have helped the change more than the easy transference of the virgin goddess of the Parthenon into the Virgin Mother of Christ. The magnificent temple of the former was changed into the metropolitan church of the latter. The west wall was broken through for an entrance; an apse was let in, and a vaulted or cupola roof, such as we find in almost all Byzantine churches. The inner surfaces were covered with pictures of Christian saints, while from the outer walls the pediments, and metopes, and friezes of Phidias looked down with stony contempt on the degenerate age which could not understand their perfection. Constans may, as Gregorovius suggests, already have heard in this reformed temple the popular hymn to the Virgin, composed by the Patriarch Sergius in 626, which commences: 'Hail thou that showest philosophers to be fools; hail thou that provest the cunning to be without sense; hail thou that unweavest the subtle meshes of the Athenians,' etc., nearly every line containing a pun which defies translation—the dole of idols, the asophy of philosophy, the alogy of technology, and so forth.

Basil II. came at the moment of his great and barbarous victory over

<sup>1</sup> W. Christ, *Anthol. Græca, carm. Christ* (Lips., 1871), p. 140, sq.

the Bulgarians, when he had sent home 15,000 prisoners with their eyes put out to their defeated sovereign; and yet Basil, after this hideous act, worships in the same great shrine, and presents it with precious gifts. Thus defaced within, with its new apse, and famous mosaic picture of the Virgin, with its cupola and its porphyry pillars, its golden dove hanging from the roof, the emblem of the Holy Ghost, its jewelled robes and mitres for the bishops, the Parthenon becomes again noted by stray chroniclers as one of the richest and most famous churches of Eastern Christendom. Basil II. orders additional paintings to be made within its walls, and we can guess very well in a general way what these decorations were like from the traditional school of Pansélonas at Mount Athos, together with the official book there preserved, which tells us exactly how each saint and angel must be represented to satisfy orthodoxy. I will not now pursue the fortunes of Christian Athens beyond the year 1000, for I know that this comparatively new subject must be administered in small and easy doses. The contacts of Normans and Franks with Eastern Christendom must be reserved for another chapter, when my readers have heard something more of the classical remains, as well as the actual condition of the country.





HEAD-DRESSES FROM THE TANAGRA FIGURINES.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BÆOTIA.

WE have perhaps delayed too long in Attica, and must hasten to take the reader over some other historical scenes, about which cluster historic memories almost as splendid as those of Attica. The most important neighbour and rival of Athens all through her history was Thebes; and had Thebes succeeded in amalgamating Bœotia with herself at an early date, after the manner of the legendary, but very real unification of Attica under Theseus, it is more than likely that Thebes would have been the real capital of Northern Greece in Hellas proper. For the territory of Bœotia was very rich and fruitful, especially so long as the Lake Copais in its centre was kept drained—a piece of economy hardly ever practised since the days of the mythical Minyans who made Orchomenos the leading town of Bœotia down to the operations of 1886. The Theban infantry was always, when properly handled, superior in fighting power to the hoplite of Attica, and the perpetual wars and battles for which the land was but too notorious—they called it Mars' Parade—must have inured the peasant to the sounds and sights of war.

Nevertheless Thebes and the surrounding Bœotia are only redeemed from the obscurity of Acarnania or Locris by this fact—the constant recurrence of battles, and by the very occasional and sudden arising of some genius of the highest order, whom even Attic jealousy and detraction could

not class among the Bæotian pigs. As regards the former point, it is not merely that famous fights, where famous men fell, were frequent in that hill-surrounded plain, but that several times the whole fate of Greece was determined by a single battle in Bæotia. Here are some of these capital cases. In 478 B.C. the question of Persian domination over Greece was finally settled by the defeat and death of Mardonius at Plataea. Passing by the great battles of the Peloponnesian War, the Spartan rule over Greece was crushed by Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371 B.C. The liberties of Greece finally succumbed to Philip at Chæronea in 338, and to Alexander at Thebes in 335 B.C. The great issue between the Roman Sylla and the Asiatic Mithridates was decided by the other great fight of Chæronea in 86 B.C. And if the later great Roman conflicts were decided further north, the possession of Greece was certainly once more decided by the great defeat of Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, with all his knights by the grand Catalan company of Spanish mercenaries near Orchomenos on March 15th, 1311 A.D.

This strange catalogue is surely enough to give dignity to a country among historians, to whom great battles are more important than any other historical events. To those who desire intellectual glories as a guarantee for the greatness of Bæotia, the list opens with Hesiod, the rival, and even the successful rival, according to legend, of Homer. The earliest Greek farming quite naturally comes into literature through a Bæotian singer. Then we have the Phoenix Pindar, matchless among lyric poets, and Corinna, who with Sappho vindicates the literary fame of the female sex among the Greeks. Epaminondas, the first and perhaps the greatest of Greek strategists and tacticians, in the proper sense, and his companion Pelopidas, were in their generation the first men in Greece. Then, after a long interval, comes the Chæronean Plutarch, who in his own person makes a St. Martin's summer in Greek literature, and has perhaps influenced the world more than any other single name in the whole of Greek letters. Even in the mediæval gloom, the splendid castle and pleasure of St. Omer on the Cadmea of Thebes, and the wonderful acts of the younger St. Luke, attest that both luxury and asceticism attained higher distinction in Bæotia than could be claimed either by Athens or by any other Greek city in the Middle Ages.

We must not therefore accept the jibes of the witty Athenians, in whose assumed contempt of the Bæotians there lay the same suspicion of conscious inferiority that lies in the Irish ridicule of English stolidity. But it was the real misfortune of this important province or division of Hellas, that while Thebes never attained to the complete supremacy gained by Argos, Sparta, Athens, in their respective districts, the lesser towns, such as Thespiaë, Orchomenos, Plataea, never were able to stand independent and alone, and develop themselves into a separate stream of history beside the predominant and often domineering Thebes. It was in fact a case of that partial



conquest which carries with it all the disadvantages both of independence and of subjection.

Let us now therefore, without prejudice, leave Attica, and take a ramble through this interesting country. It is separated from Attica by so complex a chain of mountains and defiles that no traveller can be surprised at the contrasts of the two countries. It requires hours of driving or riding to surmount all the passes round Phyle or west of Eleusis, and penetrate over Cithæron—Kítheron, as they pronounce it—to the historic site of the border town of Plataea.

I have in another work described the way, which passes by one of the finest extant Greek forts—that known as Eleutheræ—which unfortunately has not been pictured, so far as I know, since Dodwell brought out in the beginning of the century his famous *Archæological Tour in Greece*. The position of the fort is closely analogous to that I have already described at Phyle.

The very first place on our descent into Bœotia is Plataea, or rather the miserable village on its site—Plataea so famous in the thrilling narrative of the ninth book of Herodotus, hardly less famous in the terrible picture of Thucydides, who records its sudden seizure in peace by the Thebans, then, after their massacre, its great siege by the Lacedæmonians, ending with its surrender after the night adventure, by which most of the garrison escaped, and then the debate and judicial massacre of the



TERRA-COTTA FIGURINE, TANAGRA.

remainder. Nowhere in his crabbed and contorted rhetoric does Thucydides approach real eloquence more than in the spirited defence he puts into the mouth of the surrendering Plataeans. There is, then, no small town in Greece with a more brilliant history, and none more completely effaced since its ruin by the Spartans and Thebans. Nor has it attained as yet any new celebrity by reason of excavations. But its day may yet come. From its streets, or, when it was fortified, from its walls, it was easy to command a view of all the hither plain of Bœotia. For Bœotia consists of two plains, separated by a low saddle of land, and surrounded with high

mountains, from the slopes of which tumble rivers, flowing inward into the country.

The city of Thebes is now among the most uninteresting in Greece. Very few antiquities have been found there, nor is there, as at Tanagra, that rich treasure of tombs with their charming terra-cotta figurines, which have taught us so much about the every-day dress of Greek ladies. It is from these, some of them in house dress, some muffled for cold out of doors, that we find out how very different from ordinary life were the dresses of the statues of the gods and goddesses, which were once supposed to be taken by the sculptors from actual life. Indeed, anyone who attempts to drape herself in the garb of a Greek statue will find no small difficulty



SPECIMENS OF GREEK ARTISTIC DRESS.

in so doing, and for that reason we add to our pictures from the Tanagra figurines two studies of the method of assuming the classic garb, so majestic and apparently simple, in Greek statuary, where a single garment falls in beautiful lines about the figure.

It must be remembered that our Greek statues are all in conventional dress, just as much as almost all our modern statues, which represent men not only in classical garb but in obsolete armour, or in knee-breeches and pig-tails, or some other bygone fashion, which is thought more dignified. I am not sure that even the terra-cotta figurines are strictly true to ordinary life, and so give a picture—the work no doubt of reconstruction from the imagination—which may possibly give a view as near to actual life as may be of the interior of a Greek house, with the women at work.



The Greek mansion was always framed on the same plan as the modern palaces in Italy, which now represent it: it was a square or squares of building round an open court, ornamented within with fountains and statues. The rooms round the court opened upon a colonnade, through which light reached the rooms, which were small, not well ventilated, and very dark, if we are to trust the evidence of Pompeii. But we must remember that the climate was hot, and that all public business was done in the market-place, or in large theatres constructed for the purpose. The interior aspect of a



ORDINARY GREEK DRESS.

Greek house, as given in the accompanying plate, was rather graceful and refined than splendid. It was only in Roman days that palaces grew up like our modern great private houses.

All traces of the Cadmea, once a great and mighty fortress, are now gone. But that is to be accounted for by the fact that the knights of the noble family of St. Omer had made there the most splendid mediæval residence in Frankish Greece. It was the favourite resort of the Dukes of Athens, who preferred it to their Attic dominion. This famous castle and pleasure-house was adorned with mosaics and frescoes, and is described as fit for



an emperor in the *Chronicle of the Morea*. No doubt all the ruins of the old Cadmea were utilised for this palace, where dwelt for a century the ideal of chivalry—mailed knights that seemed giants to the Greeks, fair ladies with fairer provinces as their dower, troubadours, and minstrels. The Burgundian court at Thebes spoke as good French as the Parisians; and on their way to the Holy Land the Crusaders loved to dally in this fascinating outpost of Frankish culture. The deliberate and complete destruction of the



AULA WITH PRÆSTAS.

St. Omer Castle by the brutal Catalans has deprived us of a very valuable and curious specimen of mediæval architecture.

Not that there were wanting other Frankish castles in Greece. They crown many noble sites through the Morea with their bold remains, and under the modern Greek name of Palæocastra not less than one hundred and fifty have been identified. We know that the castle of Clarentza in Elis, of which a great tower remains, was also a happy resort for pilgrim-



knights on their way to Cyprus and Jerusalem, and the ruins of Mistra—the mediæval Sparta—still show remains of solid and ornamental thirteenth-century building. But the rest seem built in haste, and for war rather than for pleasure; that of Hugo de Bruyères at Karytena in Arcadia stands on so steep a cliff that we wonder how horses could have been brought into it. There are many, however, which are due not to the Frankish but to the Venetian conquerors.

The Frankish conquest of Constantinople in 1204 carried in its train this curious occupation of Greece for a century by these adventurers, who brought with them their language, their religion, their poetry, and their manner of life, and who lived apart as a strange dominant race in their castles over a vastly more numerous submissive population of Greeks, who found these new masters perhaps less oppressive than the Byzantine governors. For Byzantine corruption in provincial administration may be compared with the worst days of the Roman prætors and proconsuls. Perhaps the only serious oppression now attempted was that by the Latin clergy, who tried to proselytise their Greek brethren, and wrest into their own hands all the ecclesiastical property of the Orthodox Church. The ruling knights seem to have curbed the grasping ambition of the clerics, and many Greek churches and dioceses still survived, so that with the solid traditions and superior learning of the Greeks, a successful resistance was made to the Latin invasion. The people adhered to their old ways, and when the conquerors were overthrown their influence vanished, and they left little trace of their occupation beyond their vacant and deserted castles. Once more the toughness or indeed the indestructibility of the Greek civilisation asserted itself. What hordes of Slav barbarians could not do, companies of knights and missions of monks and bishops could not do more effectually. But the isolation of the races made this result inevitable. We know that the conquerors never thought of adopting the language of the country. The Latin priests tried to force on people who used an indigenous Liturgy the jargon of an unknown tongue. The minstrels of the court not only sang in old French or Provençal, but wholly ignored all the legends and glories of Greece. It is very remarkable that even the conquered masses learned more of Western, than the Western conquerors of Greek, literature. There are now published Greek mediæval epics which weave into the adventures of Greek heroes features from Frankish legends; so that actually in this obscure literature, only known to the students of mediæval Greek, there are some traces of what Gregorovius picturesquely calls the *marriage of Faust and Helen*.<sup>1</sup>

The vacant and modern Thebes, where even the new houses have been wrecked in our day by earthquakes, and where now nothing seems cultivated but gardens of roses, is perhaps the best halting-place for this brief digression upon one of the most curious and neglected moments of

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, where this union has its mystical meaning.

Greek history. In those days Thebes was confessedly superior to Athens in wealth and importance, especially on account of its silk manufactories, which had attracted many Jews, and which was an industry so thriving that when the Normans first conquered Bæotia, they took care to carry off to Sicily a large number of the silk growers and weavers, in order to naturalise that precious craft in their Western kingdom. Unless there may be some improvement since I saw the plain a few years ago, its agriculture has gone back to the condition of old Hesiod, who in his *Works and Days* gives many advices, but omits all mention of manuring the land. If the farmer can move from field to field and take up fallow or unused land, when he has for the moment exhausted his former holding, such an omission does not matter; and this no doubt was the state of Bæotia in Hesiod's day. Such it has been in the new kingdom of Greece till the recent vigour and firmness of the Tricoupis Government has established safety, and so promoted industry throughout the land. There is no doubt that the soil of Bæotia is very rich and fertile, and ought to supply the growing capital with many things which come a long way in ships, especially with meat, which is now chiefly supplied in tins from America, for there is good grazing land here, while there is none in Attica. Hesiod, indeed, on the slopes of Ascra, speaks of the climate as bitter in winter, severe in summer, never pleasant, and the land he cultivated was probably not in the depth of the rich plain. But his tame and prosaic advices are in great contrast to Pindar's richness, who, if any poet can, reflects the deep soil, the fatness, the luxury of Bæotian life. There is no poet more un-Attic in his splendour, more foreign to that dry and pure chastity of style which breathes the light air of Attic soil.

The other towns in this Theban plain which once had a name were Tanagra in the north, the scene of more than one battle between Athenians and Thebans; Leuctra in the south, on the way to the Isthmus, where Epaminondas with his new tactics crushed the Spartan supremacy in a day (371 B.C.); and Thespiæ, mentioned by Aristotle for its exclusive constitution, seeing that no tradesman might walk the agora of the privileged classes till he had abandoned his money-making for ten years; mentioned by later writers for its famous Eros of Praxiteles, which tourists thronged to see, which was plundered by Nero, restored, and then lost in the decay of all the art of Greece. So it is that there is hardly a mile of this land where we cannot evoke great memories which lend an imperishable charm even to desolation and decay. The American school has recently undertaken excavations in the northern part of this plain, not far from Tanagra, but as yet the results are not accessible. Whenever railways literally open up the soil, we may hope for striking discoveries, but the strange barrenness of results in the line which goes by the Isthmus to Patras makes us less hopeful. Here, however, all deep cuttings were either unnecessary or were avoided, and so perhaps such finds as that of the Roman necropolis of York



were not to be expected. Still, in a country so densely populated as the ancient Bœotia, we may be certain that large disturbance of the soil will certainly produce some startling discoveries.

Let us now pass from the plain of Thebes to the more western plain of Orchomenos, till recently occupied over more than half its area by the Copaic lake. It is separated by a mere saddle of ground from the Theban district, and yet its history has been in many respects distinct. In old days, when the so-called Minyæ were in Greece, Orchomenos was their principal stronghold. We see upon the acropolis the walls of that stronghold, and Dr. Schliemann has lately excavated the great tomb, known as their treasure-house to Pausanias. The lesser towns in this plain are also famous for battles, and battles often analogous to those of the Theban land. If the Spartans and Athenians crushed the eastern invaders of Greece on the battlefield of Plataea, the valour and efficiency of Sylla's Roman legions, defeating vast numbers by discipline and steadiness on the plain of Chæronea, crushed the great army of the Oriental Mithridates, which had poured out its multitudes over Greece. If Greek met Greek in the fatal tug of war at Leuctra, where Thebans defeated Spartan invaders, Greek met Macedonian on the plain of Chæronea also, when the heavy cavalry and phalanx of Philip overthrew the best infantry of Athens and of Thebes. In each battle a new genius showed a new power in war—Epaminondas the effect of an attacking column at one point of the enemy's line, Alexander the similar effect of a charge of heavy cavalry. I have already spoken of the famous battle of 1311 A.D., when the Spanish infantry re-established the superiority of that arm in war over the feudal cavalry, cut to pieces the Frankish knights, and succeeded to their dominion.

The mountains which surround these plains are peculiarly picturesque, gloomy Cithæron on the Attic side, looking towards the east, the rich slopes of Helicon, which bound Bœotia on the south, sending their numerous silvery streams to water the over-fertile marshes about Copais—to the west the giant Parnassus, veiling his head in the clouds, the outpost of the still loftier and gloomier mountains which make Ætolia and Acarnania the true Switzerland of Northern Greece. So here again we have a distinctive and separate section of the country, which has an almost isolated position, and follows out its own interests, to the damage or detriment of the general state of Greece. The Bœotians were never famed for broad patriotism—what Greeks indeed ever were?—unless they could contrive to cloak their ambition under plausible names. And the Bœotians above the rest were given, we are told, to sensual luxury, so much so that the condition of things described by Polybius, when there were more festivals than days, and when no law business had been transacted for years, seems to us altogether impossible.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately the character of the country is redeemed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 467.

in later days by the brilliant and gentle genius of Plutarch, who tells us that he dwelt in his small and deserted Chæronea, lest it might grow smaller.

‘The fort on the rock (called Petrachus in old days) is, indeed, very large—perhaps the largest we saw in Greece, with the exception of that at Corinth; and, as usual in these buildings, the wall follows the steepest escarpments, raising the natural precipice by a coping of beautifully hewn and fitted square stones. The artificial wall is now not more than four or five feet high; but even so, there are only two or three places where it is at all easy to enter the enclosure, which is fully a mile of straggling outline on the rock. The view from this fort is very interesting, commanding all the plain of the Lake Copais, it also gives a view of the sides of Parnassus, and of the passes into Phocis, which cannot be seen till the traveller reaches this point. Above all, it looks out upon the gate of Elatea, about ten miles north-west, through which the eye catches glimpses of secluded valleys in Northern Phocis.

‘Having surveyed the view, and fatigued ourselves greatly by our climb in the summer heat, we descended to the old theatre, cut into the rock where it ascends from the village—the smallest and steepest Greek theatre I had ever seen. But, small as it is, there are few more interesting places than the only spot in Chæronea where we can say with certainty that here Plutarch sat—a man who, living in an age of decadence, and in a country village of no importance, has, nevertheless, as much as any of his countrymen, made his genius felt all over the world. Apart from the great stores of history brought together in his *Lives*, which, indeed, even now are our only source for the inner life and spirit of the greatest Greeks of the greatest epochs, the moral effect of these splendid biographies, both on poets and politicians through Europe, can hardly be overrated. From Shakespeare and Alfieri to the wild savages of the French Revolution, all kinds of patriots and eager spirits have been fascinated and excited by these wonderful portraits. Alfieri even speaks of them as the great discovery of his life, which he read with tears and with rage. There is no writer of the Silver Age who gives us anything like so much valuable information about earlier authors, and their general character. More especially the inner history of Athens in her best days, the personal features of Pericles, Cimon, Alcibiades, Nicias, as well as of Themistocles and of Aristides, would be completely, or almost completely, lost, if this often despised but invaluable man had not written for our learning. And he is still more essentially a good man—a man better and purer than most Greeks—another Herodotus in fairness and in honesty.

‘As the day was waning, we were obliged to leave this most interesting place, and set off again on our ride home to Lebadea. We had not gone a mile from the town when we came upon the most pathetic and striking of all the remains in that country—the famous lion of Chæronea, which the



Thebans set up to their countrymen who had fallen in the great battle against Philip of Macedon in the year 338 B.C. It is of bluish-grey stone, they call it Bœotian marble or limestone, and is a work of the highest and purest merit. The lion is of that Asiatic type which has little or no mane, and seemed to us couchant or sitting in attitude, with the head not lowered to the fore paws, but thrown up. The expression of the face is ideally perfect—rage, grief, and shame are expressed in it, together with that noble calmness and moderation which characterise all Greek art. The object of the monument is quite plain without reading the affecting, though simple, notice of Pausanias: "On the approach to the city," says he, "is the tomb of the Bœotians who fell in the battle with Philip. It has no inscription; but the image of a lion is placed upon it as an emblem of the spirit of these men. The inscription has been omitted—I suppose, because the gods had willed that their fortune should not be equal to their valour."<sup>1</sup>

It is, I think, rather remarkable, that after Thebes had so long, in the Middle Ages, taken the lead from Athens, on account of the richness of its soil and its valuable silk manufacture, it should itself have given way to Livadia, the old Lebadea, which was made by the Turks the capital of this province of their dominions. No doubt Livadia holds the keys of the roads from Salona through Phocis, and so bars the way from western to eastern Hellas by road. But then Elatea is just as important a pass from the north, and so perhaps is Oropus, the northern town on the way into Attica. It is more than probable therefore that hygienic reasons were the real determinants, and that the malarious character of the Bœotian plain was the real cause of the desertion of the old capital. We have the same causes here active that are so striking in that part of Italy which the Greeks had once peopled with many rich towns, I mean the coasts of Magna Græcia. Where once great wealth and industry tilled all the land, and kept the climate wholesome, there is now such malaria, that the traveller along the line which passes through the cities of Metapontum, Sybaris, Locri, down to Rhegium, sees at every station in the summer fever-stricken officials attended by doctors, themselves ordinary officials of the railway company. When the bridges are broken by the torrents which rush from the now stripped and barren mountains, it is hardly possible to mend them in summer, from the prostration of all the workmen with fever, whereas during most of the winter the water is too high to permit any repairs. Yet formerly the superior diligence and energy of the Greek and the Italian races had solved this health problem and overcome this difficulty, which puzzles the modern engineer.

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 227-233.



MOUNT PARNASSUS.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PHOCIS—DELPHI.

WE start from Livadia into the Alps of Phocis, a country always poor, never remarkable for great men, but nevertheless very prominent at certain moments of Greek history. There is hardly any distinction between the adjoining districts of Phocis and Doris, which latter was always held to be the cradle of that Dorian race which once conquered the Peloponnesus, and ever after took the lead beside Athens in the Greek world. The Phocians, being hardy mountaineers, had a good reputation as fighting men, especially in the mercenary armies which absorbed all the poorer population, that dwelt in barren glens and gorges. But Phocis, unlike the sister districts of Ætolia and Acarnania, was a thoroughfare for all the civilised world, since in its centre was the great temple, oracle, and bank of Delphi, approached either from Bœotia by way of Livadia, or by sea from the Gulf of Salona. There were probably few more beaten thoroughfares in the country, and, moreover, few roads more picturesque, or better worth while for the modern tourist to attempt. It is stiff work, riding along precipices, and up gloomy gorges, with rocks overhanging the way, and great pines



sighing in the breeze. The country is now even more desolate than it was when Demosthenes drew his pathetic picture of its ruin and enslavement by Philip of Macedon. Yet twice at least, as we are told, Phocis was the centre of interest in the liberation of Greece from barbarian invasion: first, when a division of the Persians (480 B.C.) sought to rifle the rich temple of Delphi, and were driven back in panic-stricken flight by the personal manifestation of the God Apollo, who crushed his foes with the aid of an earthquake, and left them an easy prey to the pursuing Phocians. The second instance, the attack of the Gauls under Brennus, in 279 B.C., is reported in the last book of Pausanias with details so similar to those of Herodotus, that I have elsewhere conjectured his account to have been taken from a lost epic poet, who copied the narrative of Herodotus to adorn his song.<sup>1</sup>

These famous struggles, together with such legends as the battle of Apollo with the Python, celebrated in the extant Homeric Hymn, and the first act in the tragedy of *Œdipus*, who slew his father, Laius, at a spot where the road divided—still shown on the eastern slopes of Parnassus—make of Phocis no outlying or semi-Hellenic land like *Ætolia*, but an integral portion of the *Hellas* which has fascinated the world. Mount Parnassus, too, with its snowy summit, its wild forest, its Corycian cave, has become the conventional home for poetical inspiration, even down to the wretched book which sought to teach our boys the quantities of Greek and Latin words, and was entitled *Gradus ad Parnassum*. Yet for all that Mount Parnassus never produced, so far as we know, a real poet; for the metrical responses composed by the priests of Delphi, of which we have many, though they may have seemed very awful, with their deliberate obscurity, to the anxious inquirer, have to us a very doggerel air. The best source for the extant specimens is the work of Herodotus, who quotes them on many occasions. Our best poetic picture of this famous place is the beautiful play called *Ion* of Euripides, which represents the fair boy living in the service of the temple, like another Samuel, in youth and purity, and yet made the centre of a great moral tragedy, and torn from his retreat into the turmoil of royal state and a royal inheritance. The opening monody of this play is among the finest passages of Greek tragedy.

The only other picture of the country, and of the famous shrine, is the work of the traveller Pausanias, to whom we owe an inestimable picture of the Greece of the second century A.D. He is particularly full and explicit on Phocis and its famous temple. Let us say a word on the important moral influence of this shrine and its effect upon Greek history.

‘Homer speaks in the *Iliad* of the great wealth of the shrine; and the Hymn to the Pythian Apollo supposes its whole antecedents completed. But seeing that the god Apollo, though originally an Ionian god, as at Delos, was here worshipped distinctively by the Dorians, we shall not err if

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 158.

we consider the rise of the oracle to greatness coincident with the rise and spreading of the Dorians over Greece—an event to which we can assign no date, but which, in legend, comes next after the Trojan War, and seems on the threshold of real history. The absolute submission of the Spartans, when they rose to power, confirmed the authority of the shrine, and so it gradually came to be the Metropolitan See, so to speak, in the Greek religious world. It seems that the influence of this oracle was, in old days, always used in the direction of good morals and of enlightenment. When neighbouring states were likely to quarrel, the oracle was often a peace-maker, and even acted as arbitrator—a course often adopted in earlier Greek history, and in which they again anticipated the best results of our nineteenth-century culture. So again, when excessive population demanded an outlet, the oracle was consulted as to the proper place, and the proper leader to be selected; and so all the splendid commercial development of the sixth century B.C., if not produced, was at least guided and promoted by the Delphic Oracle. Again, in determining the worship of other gods, and the founding of new services to great public benefactors, the oracle seems to have been the acknowledged authority, thus taking the place of the Vatican in Catholic Europe, as the source and origin of new dogmas, and of new worships and formularies.

‘At the same time the treasure-house of the shrine was the largest and safest of banks, where both individuals and states might deposit treasure,—nay, even the states seem to have had separate chambers,—and from which they could also borrow money, at fair interest, in times of war and public distress. The rock of Delphi was held to be the navel or centre of the earth’s surface, and, certainly in a social and religious sense, this was the case for all the Greek world. Thus the priests were informed, by perpetual visitors from all sides, of all the last news—of the general aspect of politics—of the new developments of trade—of the latest discoveries in outlying and barbarous lands—and were accordingly able, without any supernatural inspiration, to form their judgments on wider experience and better knowledge than anybody else could command. This advice, which was really sound and well-considered, was given to people who took it to be divine, and acted upon it with implicit faith and zeal. Of course the result was, in general, satisfactory, and so even individuals came to use it as a sort of high confessional, to which they came as pilgrims at some important crisis of their life; and finding by the response that the god seemed to know all about the affairs of every city, went away fully satisfied with the divine authority of the oracle.

‘This great and deserved general reputation was not affected by occasional rumours of bribed responses or of dishonest priestesses. Such things must happen everywhere; but, as Lord Bacon long ago observed, human nature is more affected by affirmatives than negatives—that is to



say, a few cases of brilliantly accurate prophecy will outweigh a great number of cases of doubtful advices or even of acknowledged corruption. So the power of the Popes has lasted in some respects undiminished to the present day, and they are still regarded by many as infallible, even though historians have published many dreadful lives of some of them, and branded them as men of worse than average morals.

'The greatness—nay, the almost omnipotence—of the Delphic Oracle lasted from the invasion of the Dorians down to the Persian War, certainly more than three centuries, when the part which it took in the later struggle gave it a blow from which it seems never to have recovered. When the invasion of Xerxes was approaching, the Delphic priests, informed accurately of the immense power of the Persians, made up their minds that all resistance was useless, and counselled absolute submission or flight. According to all human probabilities they were right, for nothing but a series of blunders could possibly have checked the Persians. But surely the god ought to have inspired them to utter patriotic responses, and thus to save themselves in case of such a miracle as actually happened.

'It is with some sadness that we turn from the splendid past of Delphi to its miserable present. The sacred cleft in the earth, from which rose the cold vapour that intoxicated the priestess, is blocked up and lost. As it lay within the shrine of the temple, it may have been filled by the falling ruins, or still more completely destroyed by an earthquake. But, apart from these natural possibilities, we are told that the Christians, after the oracle was closed by Theodosius, filled up and effaced the traces of what they thought a special entrance to hell, where communications had been held with the Evil One.

'The three great fountains or springs of the town are still in existence. The first and most striking of these bursts out from between the Phædriades—two shining peaks, which stand up one thousand feet over Delphi, and so close together as to leave only a dark and mysterious gorge or fissure, not twenty feet wide, intervening. The aspect of these twin peaks, so celebrated by the Greek poets, with their splendid stream, the Castalian fount, bursting from between them, is indeed grand and startling. A great square bath is cut in the rock, just at the mouth of the gorge; but the earthquake of 1870, which made such havoc of Arachova, has been busy here also, and has tumbled a huge block into this bath, thus covering the old work, as well as several votive niches cut into the rocky wall. This was the place where arriving pilgrims purified themselves with hallowed water.

'In the great old days the oracle gave responses on the seventh of each month, and even then only when the sacrifices were favourable. If the victims were not perfectly without blemish, they could not be offered; if they did not tremble all over when brought to the altar, the day was

thought unpropitious. The inquirers entered the great temple in festal dress, with olive-garlands and *stemmata*, or fillets of wool, led by the *ῥοιοι*, or sacred guardians of the temple, who were five of the noblest citizens of Delphi. The priestesses, on the contrary—there were three at the same time, who officiated in turns—though Delphians also, were not considered of noble family. When the priestess was placed on the sacred tripod by the chief interpreter, or *προφήτης*, over the exhalations, she was seized with frenzy, often so violent that the *ῥοιοι* were known to have fled in terror, and she herself to have become insensible, and to have died. Her ravings in this



DELPHI AS IT IS TO-DAY.

state were carefully noted down, and then reduced to sense, and of old always to verses, by the attendant priests, who, of course, interpreted disconnected words with a special reference to the politics and other circumstances of the inquirers.

‘This was done in early days in perfect good faith. With the decline of religion there were of course many cases of corruption and of partiality; and, indeed, the whole style and dignity of the oracle gradually decayed with the decay of Greece itself. Presently, when crowds came, and states were extremely jealous of the right of precedence in inquiring of the



god, it was found expedient to give responses every day, and this was done to private individuals, and even for trivial reasons. So also the priests no longer took the trouble to shape the responses into verse; and when the Phocians in the Sacred War (355-46 B.C.) seized the treasures, and applied to military purposes some ten thousand talents, the shrine suffered a blow from which it never recovered. Still, the quantity of splendid votive offerings which were not convertible into ready money made it the most interesting place in Greece, next to Athens and Olympia, for lovers of the arts; and the statues, tripods, and other curiosities described there by Pausanias, give a wonderful picture of the mighty oracle even in its decay.

'When the Emperor Julian, the last great champion of paganism, desired to consult the oracle on his way to Persia, in 362 A.D., it replied: "Tell the king the fair-wrought dwelling has sunk into the dust: Phœbus has no longer a shelter or a prophetic laurel, neither has he a speaking fountain; the fair water is dried up." Thus did the shrine confess, even to the ardent and hopeful Julian, that its power had passed away, and, as it were by a supreme effort, declared to him the great truth which he refused to see—that paganism was gone for ever, and a new faith had arisen for the nations of the Roman empire.'

I know no better example to prove the moral dignity of the old Delphic worship than the story told by Herodotus:

'When Leutychides, on his arrival at Athens, demanded back the hostages, the Athenians had recourse to evasions, not wishing to give them up; and said that two kings had deposited them, and it would not be right to deliver them up to one without the other. When the Athenians refused to give them up, Leutychides addressed them as follows: "O Athenians, do whichever you yourselves wish; for if you deliver them up, you will do what is just; and if you do not deliver them up, the contrary. I will, however, tell you what once happened in Sparta respecting a deposit. We Spartans say that about three generations before my time there lived in Lacedæmon one Glaucus, son of Epicydes; we relate that this man both attained to the first rank in all other respects, and also bore the highest character for justice of all who at that time dwelt at Lacedæmon. We say that in due time the following events befel him: A certain Milesian, having come to Sparta, wished to have a conference with him, and made the following statement: 'I am a Milesian, and am come, Glaucus, with the desire of profiting by your justice; for since throughout all the rest of Greece, and particularly in Ionia, there was great talk of your justice, I considered with myself that Ionia is continually exposed to great dangers, and that on the contrary Peloponnesus is securely situated, and consequently that *with us* one can never see the same persons retaining property.

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 245-252.

Having, therefore, reflected and deliberated on these things, I have determined to change half of my whole substance into silver, and deposit it with you, being well assured that, being placed with you, it will be safe. Do you, then, take this money, and preserve these tokens; and whosoever possessing these shall demand it back again, restore it to him.'

'“The stranger who came from Miletus spoke thus. But Glaucus received the deposit, on the condition mentioned. After a long time had elapsed, the sons of this man who had deposited the money came to Sparta, and having addressed themselves to Glaucus, and shown the tokens, demanded back the money. Glaucus repulsed them, answering as follows: ‘I neither remember the matter, nor does it occur to me that I know any of the circumstances you mention; but if I can recall it to my mind, I am willing to do everything that is just; and if indeed I have received it, I desire to restore it correctly; but if I have not received it, I shall have recourse to the laws of the Greeks against you. I therefore defer settling this matter with you for four months from the present time.’

“The Milesians, accordingly, considering it a great calamity, departed, as being deprived of their money. But Glaucus went to Delphi to consult the oracle, and when he asked the oracle whether he should make a booty of the money by an oath, the Pythian assailed him in the following words: ‘Glaucus, son of Epicydes, thus to prevail by an oath, and to make a booty of the money, will be a present gain: swear away then, for death awaits even the man who keeps his oath. But there is a nameless Child of Perjury, who has neither hands nor feet; she pursues swiftly, until, having seized, she destroys the whole race, and all the house. But the race of a man who keeps his oath is afterwards more blessed.’ Glaucus, having heard this, entreated the god to pardon the words he had spoken. But the Pythian said, *that to tempt the god, and to commit the crime, were the same thing*. Glaucus, therefore, having sent for the Milesian strangers, restored them the money. With what design this story has been told you, O Athenians, shall now be mentioned. There is at present not a single descendant of Glaucus, nor any house which is supposed to have belonged to Glaucus; but he is utterly extirpated from Sparta. Thus it is right to have no other thought concerning a deposit, than to restore it when it is demanded.” Leutychides having said this, but finding the Athenians did not even then listen to him, departed.’<sup>1</sup>

This narrative may well be compared with the splendid passage quoted from Sophocles, and may again remind us of the apostle’s words, ‘These, not knowing the law, are a law unto themselves, and do the works of the law written in their hearts, their consciences accusing or else excusing one another.’ And when he says in the same connection, ‘The just shall live by his faith’ (or steadfastness), and speaks of the grace of God being

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vi. 86.



'revealed *from faith to faith*,' it is hard to avoid the conclusion that he regarded these lesser lights of conscience as part of the same great revelation—the candle of the Lord set up in men's hearts, which may be obscured by superstition, but can hardly be extinguished without a long national degradation, and, if I may say so, a special training in vice.

It is hardly worth our while, in our artistic review of Greece, to wander out into wild Ætolia, which is but a repetition of Phocis, without the historical interests. There was, indeed, a period when the wild Ætolians were the greatest power in Greece, and they were the last and the toughest champions for Greek liberty against the successors of Alexander, and against the Romans. Their capital, Thermus, too, was once filled with statues and other works of art, which they had acquired in their many raids, and in the mercenary service which was so lucrative in the third century B.C. But of all these things not a trace remains, nor do I know that the site of Thermus, which Philip V. of Macedon sacked, has yet been identified.

So too the Acarnanians, who lived further west still, were of little account till the Emperor Augustus founded the city of Nicopolis on the Gulf of Arta, and drafted into it all the surrounding population. The remains of this city, on the Gulf of Arta, still attest its splendour, and we know from Strabo that it was a thriving centre in his day—one of the few that remained in Greece. The one town along the rough southern coast which attracts modern sympathies, is beside the giant headland over against Patras—Missolonghi, noted for the heroic defence made by its population against the Turks in the War of Liberation, noted also for the scene of Byron's end. Here it was that perhaps the only pure ambition the poet ever showed was cut short by an early death. He was a great power in exciting European sympathy with the Greeks; his poems brought home the conflict to every house in England, and over the continent of Europe few writers have had so universal a popularity. He might almost have attained to the throne of Greece, had he survived; but the purest and noblest part of his work for Greece was accomplished, and the liberated nation have never forgotten their obligations to *Myron*, as they spell his name in modern Greek.



GREEK VASES—EARLY CLASSICAL PERIOD.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PELOPONNESUS—ACHÆA.

WE pass now from what was considered continental Greece to the 'Island of Pelops,' a land narrowly escaping the fate of Sicily, and only held on to the continent by the isthmus of Corinth, which we have already described. But the northern land, separated by the narrow fiord called the Gulf of Corinth; approaches it so nearly in another place, the ancient Naupactus, that invaders who could not pass the fortress of Corinth could easily cross by boats the narrow water—not two miles, if I judged it aright—which divides the opposing capes. It is, in fact, told in legend that the great Dorian invasion which altered the whole history of the Peloponnesus took place by this route. In the Middle Ages, for some unexplained reason, the famous peninsula adopted a new name—Morea, of which the origin is hidden in darkness, nor can scholars even agree upon the language from which it is taken. Strabo compared its form to that of a mulberry leaf, but he should have added, that it is laid upon a quadrilateral of four very high points—Mount Kyllene (now Ziria), Mount Chelmos and Erymanthus together, Mount Lykæon in Messene, the least distinct of the four groups, and Mount Taygetus in Laconia, the most distinct, next to the solitary Kyllene. These Alps, surrounded generally by lesser mountains, rise to an altitude above 6500 feet, and enclose a wild district of gorges and valleys known as Arcadia.

The general character of all the provinces, if I may so call them, of the island of Pelops are clearly marked. When you approach the sea, you have rich valleys, the alluvial deposit of the rivers; and here of course were

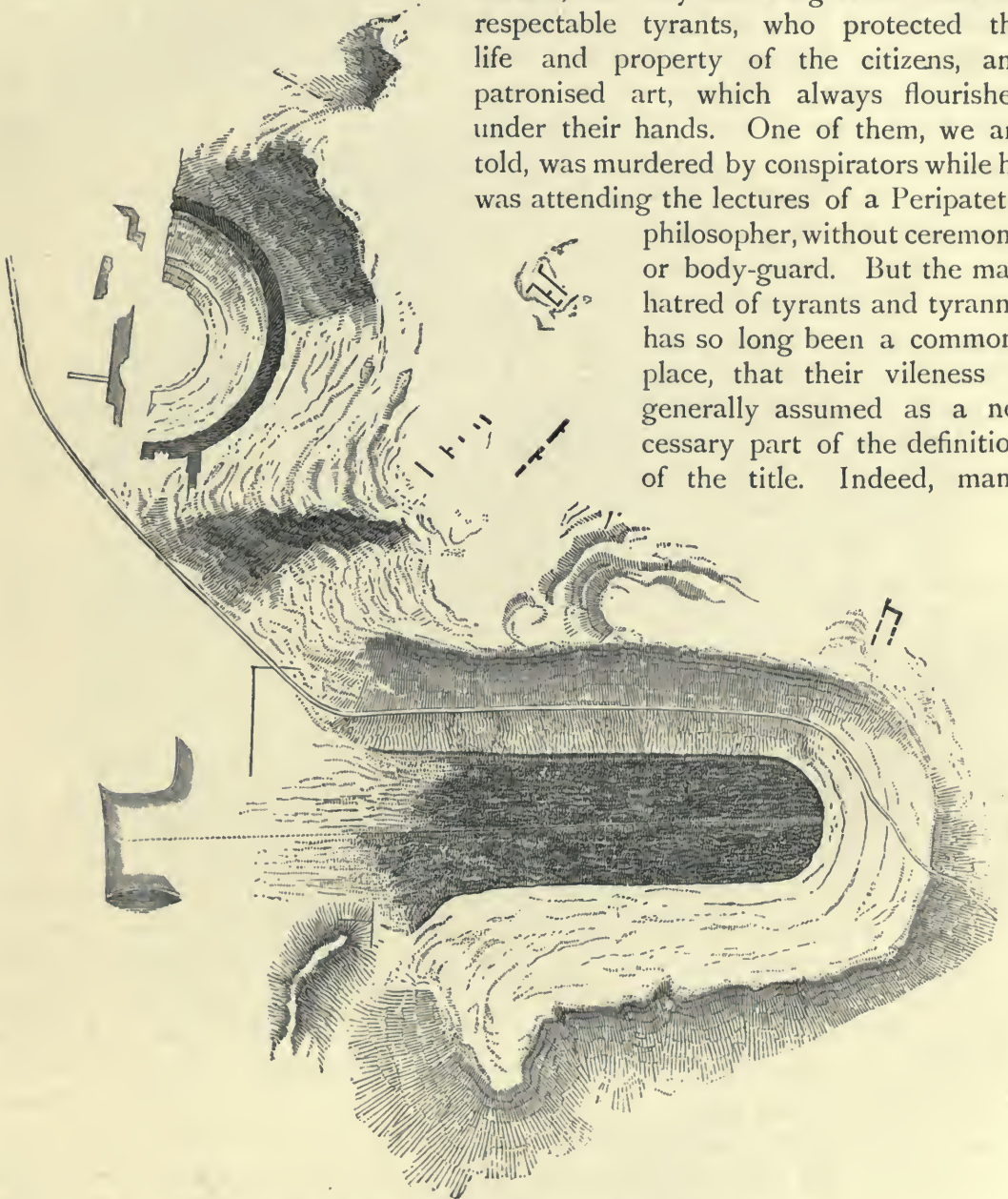


settled the principal cities—Argos on the valley of the Inachus, Sparta on that of the Eurotas, Olympia on that of the Peneus. The natural site for the capital of Messene was the rich valley of the Pamisus. But beside these famous cities were others situated either close to seaports, like Corinth, Patræ, Pylos, or occupying alpine plains, like Tegea and Mantinea, and afterwards Megalopolis. Thus the peninsula was an epitome of all the varieties and contrasts which made Greek life the brilliant, uncertain, picturesque medium for genius and energy of all kinds. Corinth was the centre of trade; and after it was destroyed, Patræ took up its place, and has maintained it to this day. Sikyon and Argos were centres of art, where great sculptors and painters made schools which attracted pupils from all Greek lands. Sparta was long the home and citadel of all the military perfection of Greece in training and drill, so that Spartan infantry was for centuries thought invincible, till one day it was crushed by the superior tactics of Epaminondas. In Elis was held the greatest of Greek festivals, which came in the end to mark the chronology of the whole people by its Olympiads; and here every kind of art, music, poetry, sculpture, architecture, was called in to beautify the great shrine of the god, whose nod, as Homer says, made all the heavens shake. Every kind of government, too, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, tyranny, was to be found within these narrow bounds; and if actual men of letters, poets, and orators seem rare from this side of Hellas, the chief patronage which made them prosper came from Sikyon, Argos, Sparta, when the brilliancy of Athens had not shown itself, or was dimmed by disaster. The early lyric poets, especially, were stimulated by the favour of Sparta and the contests at Olympia, where even prose authors read their works, while rhetoricians declaimed their eloquence. But we must not prolong these generalities, and must hasten to give the reader some details.

Already we have spoken of Patræ, and the landing there to take the train along the coast for Corinth, with the noble mountains of Achæa towering to the south, and sending down many torrents which rush red into the blue waves, as we saw them after a night's rain. And the reader knows already Corinth, with its great citadel. Between Patræ and Corinth are two remarkable sites, both famous in the last days of Greek politics—Ægium (now Vostitza) and Sikyon—both famous in the history of the Achæan League. The older Sikyon had been situate nearer the sea, but Demetrius, the famous Besieger, had laid out a new city on a higher site, and adorned it with all the appointments which were required for civilised life. We can still trace the theatre and stadium for races, but the town has not yet undergone thorough excavation of the site. This was the birthplace of the famous Aratus, the hero of the Achæan League; and the reader who wishes to know more must open the fascinating *Life of Aratus* by Plutarch, and read how this famous man was exiled, and how he recovered by a daring enter-

prise his home, and freed it from the tyrants. He must also, however, remember, while he reads the constant raving of Aratus, and indeed of Plutarch, against tyrants, that according to the evidence of the sensible

Strabo, the city had long been ruled by respectable tyrants, who protected the life and property of the citizens, and patronised art, which always flourished under their hands. One of them, we are told, was murdered by conspirators while he was attending the lectures of a Peripatetic philosopher, without ceremony or body-guard. But the mad hatred of tyrants and tyranny has so long been a commonplace, that their vileness is generally assumed as a necessary part of the definition of the title. Indeed, many



PLAN OF THE THEATRE AND STADIUM AT SIKYON.

great authorities, Herodotus, Plato, Xenophon, and Plutarch, agree in their language on this point. But they reflect and represent not the popular feeling, which was never very averse to them; they reflect the old aristocracy,



to whom tyrants were abominable, because the first step in a tyranny was to disarm, exile, or shackle those wild aristocrats, who were in the habit of oppressing the people, and riding rough-shod over the poor and the weak. To these latter a tyrant was generally a great protection against turbulent superiors, and hence it happened that, however much abused by the literary aristocrats, tyrants were perpetually reappearing at all epochs in all parts of the Greek world. There were, of course, cruel and bloodthirsty tyrants, like those notorious in story—Phalaris of Agrigentum, Nabis of Sparta, Apollodorus of Cassandra; like those painted in the *Republic* of Plato, the *Hiero* of Xenophon, and the *Dion* of Plutarch. But in all these cases the average was good and profitable to the country; it is the notable exceptions which have been brought before the public, and have produced a false and unjust prejudice against a whole class. This much I feel bound to say in passing concerning the class which Aratus pursued all his life with relentless and unreasoning hate. All this fury did not save the great Achæan from crimes as great as theirs, when he betrayed his League to the Macedonian Antigonos, and abused the absolute power for a moment conferred upon him by committing a series of semi-judicial executions, which were simply murders, accompanied with torture of the victims.

Let us pass on to Ægium, the modern Vostitza, which is at least still remarkable for its beautiful situation. It was here that the old Achæan League, when consisting of twelve small Achæan towns, had its meetings.<sup>1</sup> It is now a small but pleasant town, with a population of fishermen and vine-dressers, or rather currant-dressers, for here that small grape, so popular in England under the name of currant (*i.e.* Corinthian grape), thrives and produces a very valuable crop, as well as excellent wine. But to modern travellers the main reason for stopping at Vostitza is that from this place we can most easily make an excursion to the largest and perhaps most famous of the single monasteries in Greece, the Great Cave, or Megaspelion, where within a wall of rock are stories of chambers holding hundreds of monks, and reminding one either of a set of swallows' nests or a wasps' nest—as a matter of fact, the rocky wall of one side of a glen, having three caves within it, one over the other. They have faced the three mouths with a great wall, about 180 feet long by 100 high, and pierced nine stories of tiny windows, from which the approaching traveller, labouring up the steep ascent to the gateway, can see curious faces peering in dozens. They have thrown out balconies too, just as on the walls of the Athos monasteries, and have an outer gate as well as an inner. Here, too, all the bells of the monastery jangle out of tune to proclaim the advent of a visitor, and the highly ornamented church occupies the central grotto. As regards the ornaments of this church, the nature of the services, and the manners

<sup>1</sup> The reader should carefully distinguish it from Ægæ, near Pella, the ancient seat of the Macedonian kings, where they were still buried in later days.

of the monks, I will reserve what I have to say till we reach Mount Athos, on our exit from this journey. For the Greek monk, wherever you find him, is precisely of the same type. All his habits, his politenesses, his questions, his views of religion and politics are the same. This great cavern, however, has the additional glory of having saved 3000 women and children from the Turks and Egyptians in the War of Liberation, nor was the fortress,



VIEW ON THE GULF OF CORINTH, NEAR VOSTITZA.

with its extraordinary natural defences, ever subdued in that terrible war. The decoration of the church is due to an artist monk of Nauplia, who painted it in 1653, and this, coupled with the specimen we have of decorative painting at the Phæneromene of Salamis, done in 1723, shows how a persistent school of painting flourished among the monks from early days. The great master at Athos is Pansélinos, who lived in the twelfth century.



Here the holiest *eikon* is shown as the work of the Evangelist Luke. But the artist who has given rise to this story was a Cretan monk of the twelfth century, for whom they have substituted the greater name both here and elsewhere in Greece. The monks of Megaspelion are perhaps prouder of their cellar than of their chapel, though the wine they make is not so good as that to be found in many of the villages of these wild highlands. But whatever doubt there may be about these points, there is none that the Archbishop Germanos here raised the standard of revolt, with its white cross, in 1821, and from this stronghold came forth those heroes of the War of Independence who can never be forgotten by their enfranchised country. The library is badly kept, and not rich in valuable documents. Probably the charter of John Palæologus, or golden bulla, is the most interesting of their books. 'I had visited,' says M. Henri Belle, 'many convents in the East and the West, and few have caused me such disappointment as that of Megaspelion. I found there neither the ascetic spirit of Meteora, that other Greek monastery, nor the spirit of penitence of the Grande Chartreuse; nothing reminded me of the activity and industry of the abbeys of St. Gall in Switzerland, and of La Trappe in France, or of Mount Melleray in Ireland; you find there no trace of the artistic and intellectual greatness of Monte Cassino, or of the devotion of the monks of St. Bernard, still less the indefatigable energy of the monks of St. Benedict.'

But there are few, if any, of the famous retreats laid in a scene so splendid as that of the Greek monastery. Nature has done all she could to clothe it with dignity. In all directions there are splendid excursions; first of all to the falls of the Styx, which suggested to the ancients that river of the nether world, black and cold, which bound even the gods by the inviolable oath in its name. There are splendid alpine climbs up Mount Chelmos, and a very rough and precipitous way, leading by the village of Kalavryta to Tripotamo, and thence to Olympia. The country is wild beyond description, and yet perfectly safe for any traveller, without arms, without escort, without any precaution whatever. In the larger villages you see a man walking about with a dog-whip, and you are told that this is the policeman. Military pickets or patrols there are none. I will not say that there is no crime whatever in the Morea. When elections take place, there is such excitement that men are not rarely stabbed or shot, but this is from political hate or jealousy. There are no doubt cases of theft, of murder from jealousy among married women. But as offences against travellers, beyond occasional extortion, are unknown, so also, I was informed that illegitimate children hardly occur in the Morea. The penalties exacted—death to the father, disgrace to the mother, at the hands of her relatives—have secured the population against this kind of vice; and so we are in presence of a society in many respects so primitive as to be barbarous, in others so pure and strict as to put to shame the leading nations of Europe.

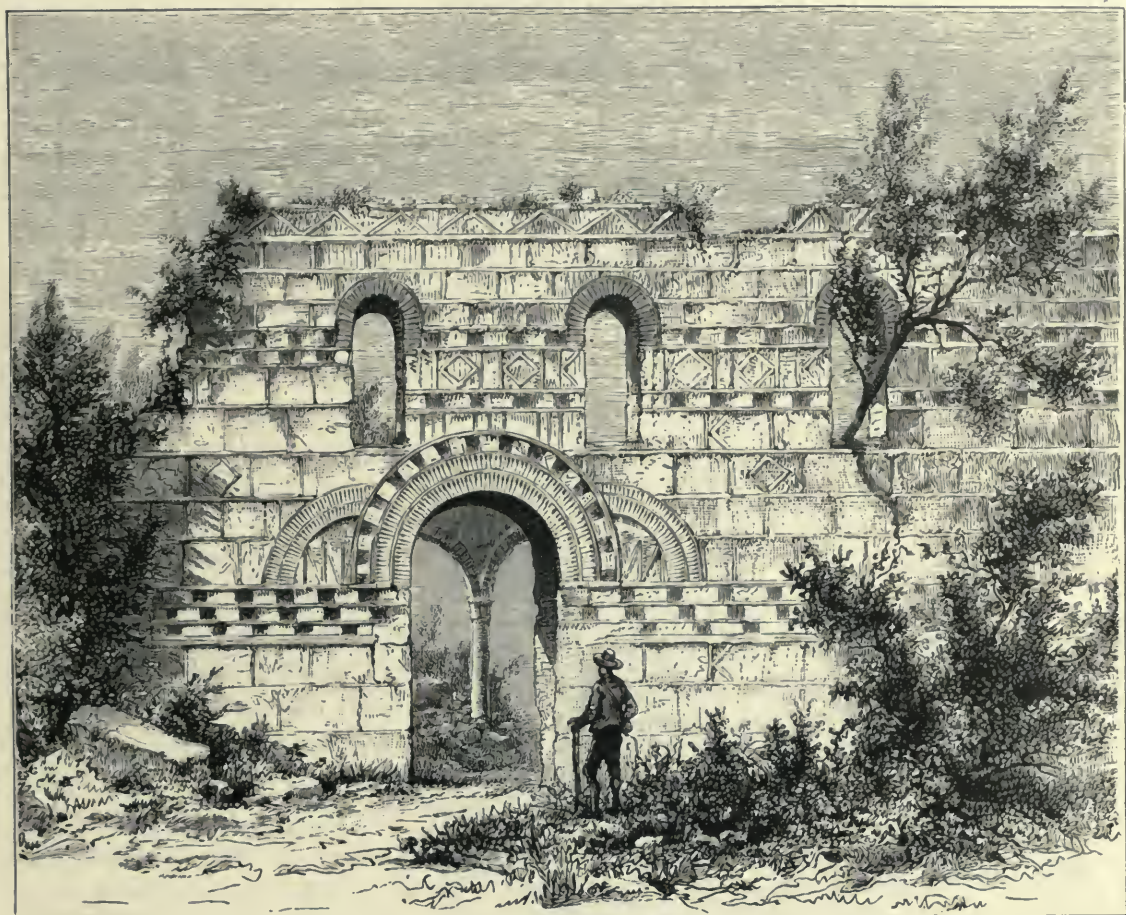
It is remarkable that in old days the mountaineers in the wild centre of the Peloponnesus were regarded as poor behind-hand specimens of Greeks. It was in the plains and on the coast that the great races lived. Things have changed so completely now, that if you wish to see a pure Greek of a high type, with the fair skin, blue eyes, and flaxen hair which Homer praises in Menelaus, you must go to the mountains or to remote islands with no traffic. The modern Greek of the seaports is essentially a mongrel Levantine, with all the talents and vices of that conglomerate of races impressed upon his very countenance. He it is who has given their bad name to the modern Greeks. He it is that once supplied pirates, and even now sometimes supplies brigands. Like the waters of his ports, which harbour in their tideless waves the filth of centuries, so the Levantine ports; Greek and Asiatic, have long been the sink of human depravity. But let no one transfer the impression they produce to the honest mountaineers who inhabit Greece. There he will find simplicity, fairness, independence, and a great natural dignity, as common features of the peasantry. The old inhabitants of Achæa, that strip of narrow coast and high slopes along the north shore of the Morea, were of this character, a poor and honest people, not distinguished in Greek history till the greater states had decayed, when their League, of which we first hear about the year 300 B.C., came into notice, as affording a model of confederation, or the union of several states, in themselves small or weak, for the purpose of mutual defence or protection. Thus it was that the Achæans had sought to protect themselves against their stronger neighbours, above all, against the roving pirates and marauders that became so notorious in the great wars after Alexander's death. When mercenary wars had lasted a long time, and many poor Achæans had earned wealth in Egypt and in Asia, this Achæan League began to take a leading place in the Greek world.

The reader must consult the special histories, such as Mr. Freeman's *Federal Government*, or my own *Greek Life and Thought from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*, for details as to this remarkable constitution, and its effect upon later Hellenistic history. It was the last, and in many respects the most perfect essay in constitution-making of the Greeks; and it is greatly to the credit of the practical men who founded the American Republic that they carefully studied their Polybius, and framed many details of their Federation upon the examples to be found in the Achæa of Aratus. The early numbers of the *Federalist*, conducted by Hamilton and Madison, which Mr. Freeman has quoted in his book, show very curiously how the same sort of solution was applied to the same kind of difficulty in far distant ages, far distant climes, and enormous disparity in area.

When Pausanias, the famous traveller of the second century A.D., describes this corner of Greece, its constitutional splendour was not what fascinated that antiquarian. It was rather the legendary splendour of having furnished royal



families for the ancient colonists who went from Greece proper to settle in the rich coasts of Asia Minor. There, in great cities like Miletus, tradition upheld the origin of their nobility from Achæan chiefs, then perhaps a name widely applied over Greece, but in Pausanias' day identified with the strip of land covered by the League. This League extended ultimately into Arcadia, which was naturally to be expected, for Northern Elis and Arcadia are separated from Achæa by no certain bounds; indeed, in these wild mountain gorges I found it well-nigh impossible to tell when I had passed from one to the other. As therefore much of what I have now said applies to Arcadia, so much of what may hereafter be said of Arcadia applies to this country. The lofty watershed which separates the sources of what flows into the gulf from what flows into the Alpheus southward, is the only natural boundary, but in a wilderness of Alps this line is neither well marked nor easily found. The ridge of Erymanthus (Olonos) is indeed a very striking feature, looking either from Elis northward, or from Patras southward; but when we pass eastward of this great snowy ridge the heights of Chelmos are by no means so distinct. Let us cross over towards the south-west, and pass into Elis, the land of the Alpheus, the whilome sanctuary of Greece where the noise of arms was not heard, the meeting-place for exiles and long separated friends, the land hallowed by the great Olympic festival.



RUINS OF A BYZANTINE CHURCH, NEAR ELIS.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ELIS—OLYMPIA.

**A**MONG the many beautiful rides through Greece none is more beautiful than that from either Patras or Vostitza, through the mountains of Achæa to Olympia, now the great centre of attraction in Elis. It is possible to skirt round the mountains by driving round from Patras by the coast, passing near the town of Clarentza, one of the principal residences of chivalry in mediæval times, and also near the site of the ancient Elis, where the training was done for Olympia, and where all the solemn oaths and preparations of the judges were made in preparation for the feast. But these are now only sites, and the scenery is not to be compared to that of the other route, which though exceedingly rough has no dangers, and may be accomplished in two days.

It is quite amazing what wonderful ascents and descents can be made



on the mules or ponies of the country. Nothing seems too precipitous for them, nor does one ever hear of an accident from their falling. You wander along the sides of great gorges, sometimes descending to the rivers which hurry along beneath, sometimes rising to a thousand feet above the stream; you pass through great undisturbed forests, where the leaves layered for centuries make the ground noiseless with their softness, and noisy with their myriad rustling. As you pass through these woods you see countless wild flowers, especially anemones, irises, orchids, showing over the russet leaf mould, and are fain to dismount and seek the roots, to carry home as a

trophy of your travel. Not once in ten miles do you meet habitations, not twice a day any travellers. It is a curious peaceful solitude, with stray patches cultivated in isolation, generally in some position of strength or utter deviousness, which protected men from their foes in the troubles of sixty years ago. Here and there you come upon patches of a Turkish road, a hard rough pavement of small stones, torturing to the human foot, and perhaps equally so to the mules for which they were constructed. When you ascend to great heights to cross some



GREEK MOUNTAINEERS.

saddle in the mountains, you obtain views over whole tracts of alpine country reaching far down into Arcadia, with long vistas into rich valleys and countless variety of peak and serrated ridge. And then you plunge into the depths down some strip of pine forest, which reaches up from beneath and makes it possible to clamber down zig-zag its almost perpendicular slope.

These experiences must be made to be understood; to the stranger there is added the excitement of real and present danger, though one cannot hear that it is often turned into reality. Whether you come suddenly upon one of the villages, or whether you climb into one you have seen across a deep ravine for some hours without being able to reach it, the inhabitants turn out to gaze at you; they give you very good red wine for a copper; when it is not full of resin, nothing can be more refreshing.

But the habit of the country is to chop the stems of the fir trees—you can see whole forests wounded in this way—and gather the gum which flows from the tree, which they put into the wine, both to preserve it and to make it wholesome. As far back as Plutarch's day the nation had come to like it; and it is said that at the royal table at Athens there are now princesses who will not drink any other beverage.

There are several streams down which the traveller can make his way to the valley of the Alpheus, in which Olympia is situated; either down the rushing Erymanthus, past the site of the ancient Psophis, or down the Ladon, which Pausanias calls the fairest of Greek rivers, or down the Kladeos, from the old Turkish fortress of Lala to the very site of Olympia. The country gradually grows tamer; the rude mountains sink into undulating hills; the rushing torrents become babbling rivers; the trees increase in size and variety, and many flowering shrubs, especially the wild pear and Judas tree, variegate the colour of the woods. The only halting-place in this journey is either Divri or Tripotamo.

When the traveller considers that every four years all possible routes must have been thronged with crowds of the ancient Greeks, especially the many exiles from their homes, who could there only meet and talk with their relatives in safety; when he remembers that these mountains must have seen artists, poets, musicians, orators making their way to the great assembly, he cannot but grieve over the beautiful desolation through which he now reaches the same goal—Olympia, though the crowded festival is gone, and there remain only the ruins of its buildings to reward his enterprise; and yet these ruins are hardly to be equalled in Europe for interest.



GREEK HOSPITALITY.



When the French under General Maison occupied the Morea in 1829, and so accomplished the good work commenced at Navarino of expelling the Egyptians and Turks, some French savants in his staff made superficial excavations here, which disclosed not only the tessellated floor of the temple, but some fragments of sculpture, which now adorn the museum of the Louvre. This was one of the many benefits conferred on art and to civilisation by this well-timed occupation.

Before we enter upon a closer description of the athletics of the Greeks, as well as the actual remains now visible at Olympia, it may be well to give the general reader some of the broad facts in the history of the famous place. The Greeks, of course, traced the origin of the festival to mythical times. It had been established by the god Herakles, on his return from one of his numerous adventures, and Pindar, in an extant ode, has given us a poetic account of this foundation, according to the current beliefs of his day. To any one who considers that the athletic sports so brilliantly described in the twenty-third book of Homer's *Iliad* correspond in hardly a detail to those established at Olympia, this belief in a very early and solemn initiation of the festival, even by some ancient hero turned into a god by popular admiration, will not hold water. And there was quite another account of the matter, which recorded that the several contests were added one after the other at fixed and well-known intervals. Their successive additions are particularly specified in Pausanias' account of Olympia. The archaeologists, however, held that the old and complete establishment by Herakles had passed into oblivion, and that the various contests were gradually *revived*, but not originated in historical times—a mere subterfuge to save the credit of Pindar and his legends.

The next point on which most of the ancients were agreed was that the regular celebration every four years began with Iphitus, King of Elis, assisted or patronised by the celebrated Lycurgus; though, so far as we can make out, the date assigned to Iphitus does not agree with the date assigned to Lycurgus, and though we know very well that the Spartan discipline never encouraged athletic training, but preferred the pursuit of game and other field exercises. However, the short or sprint race of two hundred yards, always *the* event of the festival—probably because it was the oldest, perhaps because it was the first, and its victor gave his name to mark that period of four years—was said to have been won by Corœbus, in the year corresponding to our 776 B.C.; and from that time onward a regular register seems to have been kept, by which ultimately the Greek historians came to mark events. This list was therefore held to be of the last importance; the late copies surviving of it have been edited with care, and even the sceptical Grote sets down the year 776 B.C. as the point where real and trustworthy Greek history begins.

But the older Greeks said that there were twenty-seven victors anterior

to Corœbus, and that the list began properly with the god Herakles. And this was in strict consonance with their practice in all genealogies. The Spartan kings, for example, were traced back in regular lists to the same god, Herakles. And at Halicarnassus Sir C. Newton found, among other inscribed stones, a genealogy of priests, made in the second century B.C., that is to say, in late and sceptical times, when the list was traced back through twenty-six generations to the god Poseidon. I suppose it was the fact that the Olympic register did not begin with a god—that twenty-seven names which would have established that commencement of the series were missing—which deceived modern scholars, and made them believe in the genuineness of this wonderful list. So sure was I of the contrary that I positively predicted the excavations at Olympia would produce no evidence of any such list. For Pausanias, in his long and elaborate survey of the most ancient extant votive statues, could not find anything older than the so-called thirty-third Olympiad.

But in addition to all these arguments, Plutarch, at the opening of his *Life of Numa*, has actually told us who made out the register, and that he did it at a late period, and upon insufficient evidence. It was the sophist Hippias of Elis, who did this work for his fellow-citizens at some time shortly after 400 B.C. Of course the early part of it was mostly made up from guesses, traditions, and even from deliberate invention. So that we must no longer soothe ourselves with the convenient belief that we have a sure and fixed starting-point for our Greek chronology.

There is far better evidence that shortly after the year 600 B.C. athletic contests came into fashion, and that the conduct of the Eleans in the management of the games was so censured that rival meetings sprang up, of which the Pythian (at and beneath the town of Delphi, already described), the Isthmian, on the narrow neck of land north of Corinth, and the Nemean, between Corinth and Argos, became famous. An echo reaches us of the cause of this movement, in the notice that no Elean was allowed to compete at the Isthmus, and also in the story told by Herodotus, that the Eleans sent to Psammetichus II., King of Egypt, about 590 B.C., to ask him how they might best arrange the details of their festival. Why they chose this distant king as an adviser does not appear. He replied that he should—as they desired his opinion—advise them to exclude every Elean from their own contest. It appears very plainly from this that they had been favouring unduly their own people, and had awarded prizes to them against other Greeks whom the audience thought entitled to the honour. These facts show that in the year 600 B.C., roughly speaking, the Olympic festival had become one of public interest to the Greeks of the Peloponnesus and of Phocis, and that the local management was distrusted. It is likely that as a mere local meeting, the games were much older, but on this point we have no trustworthy evidence. I think the oldest definite notice in Pausanias points



to the twenty-ninth meeting, which corresponds to our 665 B.C. But whether this date is not part of the artificial scheme of Hippias, we cannot tell.

It was not till the middle of the sixth century B.C. that the rise of



ATHLETE USING THE STRIGIL OR FLESH BRUSH  
(THE APOXYOMENOS OF LYSIPPUS).

luxury at the courts of the tyrants, and the consequent development of the fine arts, led to the production of various artistic offerings, especially of votive statues. The victor was permitted to set up a bronze or marble statue of himself at Olympia. Nothing contributed more to the development of Greek art than this fact. As the competitors were then allowed to appear naked, the statues also, in contrast to the older clothed and painted figures of wood, were made to represent the naked human form, and instead of attempting to represent ideal beauty in a god, some attempt was made to reproduce the figure and face of a perfectly trained and developed man. Together with this stimulus to statuary, came the fashion of employing lyric poets to compose triumphal odes for the celebration of these victories. And we still have in the odes of Pindar magnificent specimens of what could be produced by the Greeks, even at demand and for pay, in the way of poetry. The poems of Pindar have ever since been the unattainable models for all lyric poets. But the accompaniments of dance and music, which they required for their production—it was a combination like Wagner's operas—are now gone irrevocably. The odes of Gray will give the English reader a faint echo of them; though to me the genius of Shelley is perhaps more akin

to that of Pindar, so that I should prefer the opening of *Queen Mab* as a modern, though also a very faint, parallel. The rise of Athens and Sparta successively, neither of which patronised the Olympian games as the lesser states did, appears to have damaged the international importance of the games; nevertheless they were still of such recognised public weight

that the territory of Elis was considered sacrosanct, that the period of the quadrennial games was regarded as a solemn truce in the time of war, and that all Greeks of all states were enabled to travel thither and meet their friends and their enemies under the protection of this great national holy-day. It is a wonder that we do not hear more frequently of doings at the feast under these exceptional circumstances. In two or three rare cases Sparta and Argos had interfered, and taken the celebration out of the hands of the Eleans, but this was an outrage, and was remembered for centuries.

The days came when even this ancient home of peace and of country life was violated, and the Eleans were compelled to arm themselves to repel invasion; but with the decay of Greece, the subjugation by Macedonia, and the consequent spread of Greek manners and customs over the world, the importance of this and the other feasts distinctly increased. It was the meeting-place for all those whom the violent convulsions among the various states had deprived of their homes, and who were wandering about as pirates, as mercenaries, as aliens without civic rights, in strange cities. From this centre all political news were scattered abroad; negotiations were here undertaken by the artists who came ostensibly for performances; conspiracies against the ruling powers were no doubt also frequent enough. Moreover, the habit for rhetoricians and lyric poets to advertise their works by recitation had come more and more into fashion, so that I conclude that if the Olympic games were inferior or had degenerated in the way of mere athletic contests, they had certainly not lost in what may be called national Hellenic importance. So it was that when Alexander, wearied of the constant sullen resistance to his policy on the part of the leading Hellenic states, issued a public letter to the assembled Greeks at Olympia that he would restore all exiles to their homes, some twenty thousand such people heard the proclamation with transport, and immediately prepared to reassert their rights at home. We can imagine with what delight the relatives who had come from that home to see their exiled friends at the sacred truce embraced them, and began to lay plans for ousting the intruders who had taken possession of their property; and so we are not surprised that this last missive of the great conqueror threw all Greece into a fever, and produced the Lamian War, in which Antipater, the regent of Alexander, was so nearly overpowered.

With the subjugation of Greece under the Romans, Olympia naturally declined in importance, for the Romans never condescended to enter the arena naked, and to contend with their subjects. Cicero, indeed, speaks with such annoyance of the report that he had gone to the games at the moment of political excitement between Cæsar and Pompey, that we feel they had come down to something like the modern Derby. As regards the decay of this kind of sport, I will only add that Alexander the Great, as well as Philopœmen, the military genius of the Achæan League, disliked



this kind of exercise, as not conducive to good soldiering; and that the disfavour of such leading men must have had a most serious effect in turning ambitious young men from engaging in them. They advocated the sound principle that the exercise obtained in field sports, especially in hunting dangerous game, which are practised without special physical training, and without special contests upon fixed days as a climax of the training, is superior in many ways to the gymnasium and the racecourse.

In our own day the same contrast subsists between the training of the sons of English gentlemen and the sons of foreigners of the same rank. While we regard such games as cricket and football, and such sports as hunting, shooting, and salmon fishing, the highest and best training for manly qualities, the Germans and other foreign nations are reduced to gymnastic exercises under the direction of a professional master, which may perhaps be better in strengthening particular muscles, but wholly inferior in developing that spirited element in the soul which Plato considered the ally of reason against the inroads of the baser passions. At the Olympic games, just as at modern meetings, we hear of 'running for the pot,' and we know that there were athletes who made the circuit of various such festivals for the purpose of gain. This professional aspect of things is well-nigh impossible in genuine field sports, such as Xenophon loved, and Alexander, and Philopœmen, and Polybius.

The following details concerning the contests, which I have gathered with great care, and already expounded elsewhere, will be of interest to the reader.

'In the Olympic games the running, which had originally been the only competition, always came first. The distance was once up the course, and seems to have been about two hundred yards. After the year 720 B.C., races of double the course, and long races of about three thousand yards, were added; races in armour were a later addition, and came at the end of the sports.

'There were short races for boys at Olympia of half the course. Eighteen years was beyond the limit of age for competing, as a story in Pausanias implies; and a boy who won at the age of twelve was thought wonderfully young. The same authority tells us of a man who won the short race at four successive meetings, thus keeping up his pace for sixteen years—a remarkable case. There seems to have been no second prize in any of the historical games, a natural consequence of the abolition of material rewards. There was, naturally, a good deal of chance in the course of the contest, and Pausanias evidently knew cases where the winner was not the best man. For example, the races were run in heats of four, and if there was an odd man over, the owner of the last lot drawn could sit down till the winners of the heats were declared, and then run against them without any previous fatigue. The limitation of each heat to

four competitors arose, I fancy, from their not wearing colours (or even clothes), and so not being easily distinguishable. They were accordingly walked into the arena through an underground passage in the raised side of the stadium, and the name and country of each proclaimed in order by a herald. This practice is accurately copied in the present Olympic games held at Athens every four years.

'The next event was the wrestling match, which is out of fashion at our prize meetings, though still a favourite sport in many country districts. There is a very ample terminology for the various tricks and devices in this contest, and they have been explained with much absurdity by scholiasts, both ancient and modern. It seems that it was not always enough to throw your adversary, but that an important part of the sport was the getting uppermost on the ground; and in no case was a man declared beaten till he was thrown three times, and was actually laid on his back.

'When the wrestling was over, there followed the throwing of the discus and the dart, and the long leap; but in what order is uncertain, for I cannot accept as evidence the pentameter line of Simonides, which enumerates the games of the pentathlon, seeing that it would be impossible to vary them from the order he gives without great metrical difficulties. Our only safe guide is, I think, the alleged date of the origin of each kind of competition, as it was plainly the habit of the Greeks to place the new event next after those already established. The sole exceptions to this is in the establishing of contests for boys, which seem always to have come immediately before the corresponding competition for men. But we only know that both wrestling and the contest of five events (pentathlon) were dated from the 18th Olympiad (710 B.C.), and are not informed in what order each was appointed.

'The question of the long jump is interesting, as it still forms a part of our contests. It is not certain whether the old Greeks practised the running jump, or the high jump, for we never hear of a preliminary start, or of any difficulty about "breaking trig," as people now call it. Furthermore, an extant epigram on a celebrated athlete, Phaëllus of Kroton, asserts that he jumped clean over the prepared ground (which was broken with a spade) on to the hard ground beyond—a distance of forty-nine feet. We cannot, of course, though some German professors believe it, credit this feat, if it were a single long jump, yet we can find no trace of anything like a hop, step, and a jump, so that it seems wonderful how such an absurdity should be gravely repeated in an epigram. But the exploit became proverbial, and to leap *ὑπὲρ τὰ σκάμματα* (beyond the digging) was a constantly repeated phrase.

'There remain the two severest and most objectionable sports—boxing and the pankration. The former came first (Ol. 23), the other test of strength not being admitted till Ol. 33 (650 B.C.). But one special occasion



is mentioned when a champion, who was competing in both, persuaded the judges to change the order, that he might not have to contend against a specially famous antagonist when already wounded and bruised. For boxing was, even from Homeric times, a very dangerous and bloody amusement, in which the vanquished were always severely punished. The Greeks were not content with naked fists, but always used a special apparatus, called *ἱμάντες*, which consisted at first of a weight carried in the hand, and fastened by thongs of hide round the hand and wrist. But this ancient cestus came to be called the gentle kind (*μειλίχαι*) when a later and more brutal invention introduced "sharp thongs on the wrist," and probably increased the weight of the instrument. The successful boxer in the *Iliad* (Epeius) confesses that he is a bad warrior, though he is the acknowledged champion in his own line; but evidently this sport was not highly esteemed in epic days.

'Little need be added about the pankration, which combined boxing and wrestling, and permitted every sort of physical violence except biting. In this contest a mere fall did not end the affair, as was usual in wrestling, but the conflict was always continued on the ground, and often ended in one of the combatants being actually choked, or having his fingers and toes broken. One man, Arrachion, at the last gasp, broke his adversary's toe, and made him give in, at the moment he was himself dying of strangulation. Such contests were not to the credit either of the humanity or of the good taste of the Greeks.'

The recent excavations of the Germans, which had been suggested not only by the description of Pausanias, but by the early probing of Maison's Frenchmen (above, p. 140), have brought to light at Olympia artistic remains of architecture and sculpture, second in importance only to those at Athens. The great temple of Zeus, the main edifice of the whole *Altis*, or sacred enclosure, has been unearthed, and found just as the great earthquake which destroyed it in the fifth or sixth century A.D. left it. All the pillars were luckily thrown outwards by a shock striking the floor from beneath, and the higher parts, containing the sculptures of the gable and frieze, were landed some fifty feet away in the soft alluvial clay, which received them gently, and presently, with new floods from the Alpheus, covered them up in mud. There were, of course, many pieces carried away for Byzantine building in the dark ages, and many portions of statues and reliefs were doubtless put into the lime-kiln by the barbarians who occupied the *Altis*; a great Byzantine wall of defence was even constructed wholly of ancient débris across the site. But, on the whole, the circumstances have been unusually favourable. The noses of most of the pediment figures are intact, and to any one who has wandered through the museums of Greece and Italy, and felt the perpetual grief of beautiful faces marred by a shattered nose, and the annoyance of beautiful faces destroyed by a restored nose, will know

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 283-291.

how important is this detail in our appreciation of ancient sculpture. The great drums of the Doric pillars are lying so strictly in their order that they could be set together again with mere mechanical labour.

This great temple of massive Doric style was adorned in its triglyphs with scenes from the life of Herakles, of which some slabs were discovered in the gables with two great compositions—the eastern by Pœonios, the western by Alkamenes, a rival of Pheidias—of which the principal figures are



INTERIOR OF THE GREAT TEMPLE AT OLYMPIA (RESTORED).

recovered. The eastern group represents a stationary group of figures preparing for the chariot race of Pelops; the western is tossed about in the wild confusion of the conflict of the drunken Centaurs with the Lapithæ at the marriage feast of the hero Peirithous. In the centre of each group, where the gable was at its full height and allowed scope for a large standing figure, was a god—the Providence which guides human events visibly portrayed, but calm and without emotion at the quarrels of men. At



the flat angles of the triangular space were recumbent figures of the local rivers and nymphs, to indicate the personified scenery in which the mythical events took place. This habit of representing a mountain or a river by its tutelary god was a well-known device of the Greek sculptor, by which he avoided the difficulties of representing scenery, and also satisfied the Greek instinct of making all Nature full of conscious life.

The interior of the temple is always described as of a splendour not

equalled even in the Parthenon; for there, in the midst of countless treasures of offerings, was the colossal statue of Zeus by Pheidias, which was the grandest effort of the grandest sculptor that has ever lived. Pausanias says the only fault in the aspect of it was that you felt if Zeus were to rise from his throne his head would go through the roof, which was too low for the size of the figure. In one hand he held a sceptre with a golden eagle on the top, in the other a golden figure of victory; the general type of the head is probably reproduced in the famous bust known as the Jupiter of Otricoli. This matchless work of art was carried away to Constantinople, when the games were abandoned and the temple falling into decay, where it was burned in one of the many fires which ravaged that capital; but it is



HEAD OF ZEUS (JUPITER), KNOWN AS THE OTRICOLI TYPE.

very curious how silently the great works of classic art disappeared in Byzantine days. The stray notice which I have just cited is only accidental, and not quite trustworthy. The other great masterpiece of Pheidias, the Athene within the Parthenon of Athens, a statue made of gilded surface with ivory extremities, disappeared no one knows how or whither; so did the great bronze Athene outside the temple; so did, in fact, all the great statues which stood in the Greek temples. Perhaps we have a solitary specimen in the celebrated Venus of Milo or Melos, which was found on that island

near the ruins of a temple, and which we now know to have been the work of a late sculptor, archaising in style, and copying the great models of Pheidias.

The two most important single figures, indeed the only two single



THE VENUS OF MELOS (NOW IN THE LOUVRE).



THE NIKE OF PÆONIUS FOUND AT OLYMPIA.

figures of importance found at Olympia, are the Nike (Victory) of Pæonius and the Hermes of Praxiteles. The former was set upon a very high pedestal, and represented a winged woman just alighting from heaven. Most of the figure, though mutilated, has now been picked up. But the face has apparently been hacked away from the head, and the arms are



missing. Nevertheless, when compared with the reliefs of the Nike temple at Athens, and the splendid Nike of Samothrace, it gives us a very clear notion of the general type of the goddess in sculpture, a type almost as fixed as the types in the iconography of the Byzantine saints. This figure, which had



A WARRIOR OF MARATHON  
(ABOUT 480 B.C.).



ÆSCHINES THE ORATOR (ABOUT 330 B.C.).

just been discovered when I was for the second time at Olympia, was received by its finders with an exaggerated enthusiasm, and, though dating from the best epoch, and the work of a sculptor of the highest repute, it does not compare favourably with the far later, and so far anonymous, work of the sculptor of Samothrace.

In one respect, however, the excavations have proved disappointing. As regards portrait statues of athletes, of which there were specimens by all the great masters, even by Pheidias, who hardly ever condescended to such work, we have recovered only one bronze head, very realistic and coarse of type, of a boxer. So that we are still beholden to the copies in Italian museums of the athletes of Pythagoras of Rhegium, of Polycleitus, and of Lysippus, to tell us what these portrait statues were. More interesting perhaps, as we are speaking of portraiture in sculpture, are the representations of poets and artists, sometimes purely imaginary, as is the famous bust of Homer, sometimes only idealised Nature, like the famous statues of Sophocles (in the Lateran at Rome) and Æschines (in the Naples Museum). The development of these figures, and of the athlete of Lysippus already mentioned, from the rude reliefs in the days of the battle of Marathon, are very striking, and we accordingly give on the preceding page the extreme members of the series. The bust of Sophocles is probably a copy of that set up in the restored or reconstructed theatre of Dionysus at Athens by Lycurgus when he was minister of finance (about 330 B.C.). The other statues (of the orators) are of about the same date. Unfortunately our examples of intermediate stages in sculpture are very scanty. But we may hope that in a few years further discoveries will enable us to show the particular steps in the rapid progress of this wonderful art from rude convention to truth, from truth to beauty, from beauty to perfection in the representation of the human figure.

The other objects of art found at Olympia are archaic bronzes, hundreds of little votive cows in bronze, found under the ashes of the great altar; foundations of various treasure-houses, used as banks by sundry Greek cities; fragments of Alexandrian and Roman architecture. But upon these the reader must consult some more special work.





CITADEL OF ARGOS.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ARGOS, MYKENÆ, AND TIRYNS.

INSTEAD of proceeding at once southward to Messene and Elis, we shall now cross the peninsula and visit the other great site where modern excavation has revealed to us the treasures of bygone days—I mean the province of Argos, known of old by its famous capital, but to us by the astonishing discoveries made by my friend, Dr. Schliemann, on the sites of the two capitals older than Argos, and once its rivals—I mean the sites of Mykenæ and Tiryns. There is also in this most important section of the Peloponnesus the interesting fort and harbour of Nauplia, celebrated as far back as the oldest Greek legends, and Epidauros, where we have now recovered the great theatre built by the statuary Polycleitus, and once famed as the most perfect in Greece. So then Argos, where every step is full of historic suggestions, has many points of the highest archæological interest.

There was a day when Argos, not Sparta, was the leading capital in the Peloponnesus, and this is expressed by the legend which gives to the eldest brother of the Heracleids who conquered the land, the province of preference, and fixes him at Argos. From this mythical personage the royal families of Argos, and even the noblest Corinthians, loved to derive their genealogy; and many a notable Argive personage, like the tyrant





THE GATE OF LIONS AT MYCENÆ.







THE GULF OF NAUPLIA.

Pheidon, has been put back a hundred years in time for the purpose of calling him the tenth from Herakles. I have elsewhere shown this to have been done in the case of Archias, the founder of Syracuse, who was considered a contemporary of Pheidon. It is one of the most ingenious points in Curtius' Greek History to have proved the same kind of error about Pheidon. We were all taught to put him in 747 B.C., which was called the eighth Olympiad; he seems really to belong to the year 660 B.C. But this is what may be called learned speculation.

You can approach Argos through the mountains from Corinth, over rugged hills and dales covered with brushwood, and meadows full of arbutus and mastic, anemones and cistus, asphodel and sweet-smelling thyme, and then you come into the valley of the Inachus, high up from the sea, close to Mykenæ. When I first went this route there was only a mule-track, and very rough riding it was. Since then they have advanced to a carriage road, and now, I believe, to a branch railway from Corinth, so that what once required two laborious days, now can be performed in a few hours. And yet how glad I am that I saw Greece before all these modern improvements—with its women in their

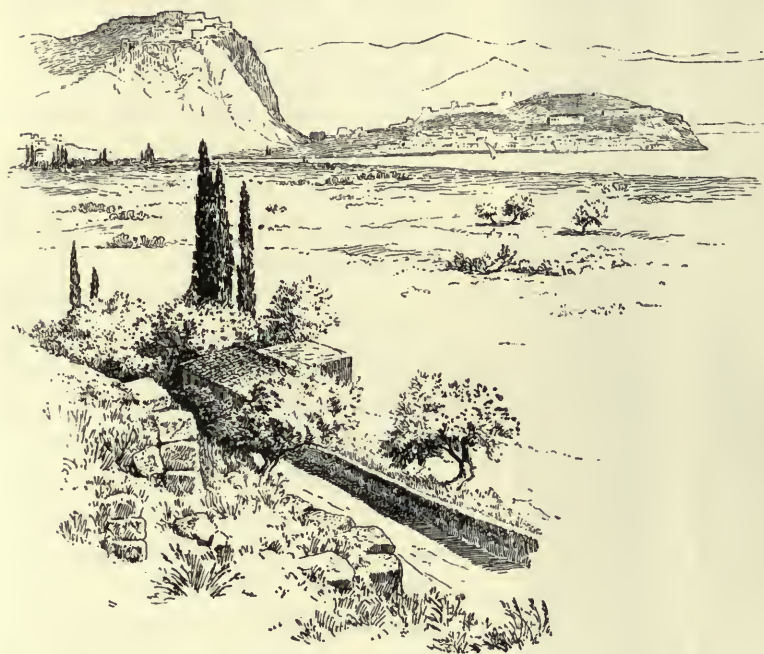


rich home-made costume, as they still wear it about Megara, with even their mules covered with rugs of splendid Oriental colours, which now alas! are being displaced by the modern German taste. King Otho and his court have indeed much to answer for in Greece. They introduced good bread at Athens, and the good restaurants, but they also made dreadful things in dress the fashion, so that the poor country-women think it good style to abandon their picturesque woollen skirts and shaggy overcoats (I know no better name) for calicoes of arsenic green and magenta.

You can also reach Argos by steamer from Athens—one of the best of all ways to see Greek life and scenery to the best advantage—landing at the picturesque port of Nauplia. The Gulf of Nauplia is very beautiful,

and a sunset seen from the little port, with the gulf in the foreground, and the sun sinking behind the Arcadian mountains, is a sight one never forgets.

From Nauplia to Argos is only a drive of an hour and a half, and on the way, not far outside the gates, we meet with the rock of Tiryns, standing out of the plain. But I will now take the reader on at once to the old capital, before we



NAUPLIA, SEEN FROM TIRYNS.

enter upon the consideration of the pre-historic splendours around us. The town of Argos is a typical Greek town, flat and unsightly, made of mud houses, with a semi-oriental bazaar, and hardly any accommodation for strangers. They naturally stay at Nauplia, so that an innkeeper would have little custom; and as it is the notion of this profession in Greece that an occasional guest must be made to pay extravagantly, because the host has so few opportunities for profit, it is well to beware of venturing into any inn in such a town without a strict bargain. On the other hand, I found private hospitality here and everywhere in Greece most abundant and kindly, provided travellers will not go in large parties, for whom there is not accommodation in the modest homes of the willing hosts. Twice over at Argos have I met with the most generous treatment from

a gentleman whom I now, in the days of increased travelling, fear to name, lest my gratitude might bring upon him new and unexpected demands.

It is not easy to define the limits of Argos. You find yourself in the middle of fruit gardens, with oranges, lemons, oleanders, roses, growing within mud fences, and you imagine it a suburb of the town, whereas you are really in its centre. When seen from its fortress above, it shows that peculiar character which I cannot remember anywhere else save in the towns of Canada, of a collection of gardens and orchards with their houses making up a city. The type of the people is peculiarly fair. If you see the children coming out of school, you will be surprised how few have the brown skin and black eyes and hair of real Southrons. The most valuable produce of the plain is tobacco, which, if properly grown, would supply all the country round with considerable wealth. 'Turning round a corner, you stumble upon a priest, followed by two acolytes carrying upon a cross-stick between them a copper cauldron of water, with the Byzantine cross upon the handle. It is the pappas returning from a baptism. The Orthodox Church still practises baptism by immersion. For this purpose infants are generally carried to the neighbouring church; in case they are delicate, or in case their parents can pay a sufficient fee, the pappas goes to the house, mumbles some prayers among the assembled household, and, seizing the infant by the arm, plunges it three times into the cauldron. Though this treatment is sometimes fatal to life, the orthodoxy of the people and their clergy will not tolerate any modification of the ritual of this sacrament.'

On the slope of the ascent to the Larissa or fortress is a great theatre, larger, I think, than that of Athens; for it is said to measure 150 yards in diameter, and to be capable of holding 20,000 people. Of course it was intended as a place of assembly for the whole free population as well as for a theatre. There are no ornaments or carved seats preserved, as there are at Athens. But the view from the higher tiers, looking eastward towards Nauplia, across the rich plain and the gulf, is hardly less beautiful than that from Nauplia over the same ground westward.

In 1822, the castle of Larissa, which looms down from the top of Mount Chaon, 1000 feet above the theatre, was held by the insurgents, whom the Turks besieged there for many weeks. In the end the Turkish army was taken in the rear by other insurgents coming from Corinth, and destroyed. The Greeks fought singing the patriotic songs of their poet Rhigas, which turned their shepherds and peasants into real soldiers. Wonderful stories are now told of their individual heroism. Perhaps these acts have been exaggerated, but the fact remains, that without any leaders of genius, or even of high character, the Greek people persisted in this awful struggle for ten years, and finally obtained their liberty. It is false and ridiculous to



translate these rude and ignorant shepherds into just and wise heroes, so that they have suffered unduly, when they were found to deviate widely from the antique type invented by the pedants for the old Greeks, and foisted by enthusiasts upon the new. When the heroism of this enslaved people is mentioned, there are never wanting those who expose in them acts of treachery, cruelty, and duplicity, which are so exaggerated as to obscure the grand general features of the insurrection—the love of liberty and the spirit of sacrifice. Thus the mountaineers of Maina (the old ‘free Laonians’), when summoned by the new national government to come and defend Argos, began, when they came from their homes, by pillaging all the Greek villages which they found recently deserted, and they then went back and hid their spoil in the mountains; but when this was over, they rallied round their standard, and fought with the utmost bravery against the Turks. But the notion of profiting by patriotism, of taking rewards or even pay for personal services while doing the service of the country, is as old as Demosthenes, and is expounded in the coolest way by his rival Hyperides.

But we must leave the capital, the historic centre of the province, to visit the pre-historic centres, which were famous long before Argos rose to power, and which have quite recently recovered their ancient importance, owing to the genius and perseverance of that indefatigable excavator, Dr. Schliemann. After he had won his first laurels by discovering the real site of New Ilium, and then proving that the universal belief of classical days was correct, which placed the Troy of Homer at or under the same site, he undertook to examine the old sites in Argolis, which are indeed well marked, but seemed such barren rock as to allow little chance of finding many underground treasures.

Let us consider for a moment what hints or suggestions were to be found in the old writers—hints which seemed plain enough when he utilised them, though nobody else had ever thought of applying them in a practical way. The relation of the three capitals of Argolis to each other is not very easily determined. Lying in a triangle, of which we may call the base the four miles between Tiryns and Argos, the sides the eight miles from either to the vortex at Mykenæ, far up the valley of the Inachus, this much is certain, that in Homer’s poetry, Mykenæ is the chief city, and the home of the most splendid royalty, while nevertheless one of the most notable heroes, Diomedes, is King of Argos. He is also lord of Tiryns, which in the poem is alluded to as a strong fort, but no longer as a separate capital or residence. In the legends, however, of the Perseids, and of the birth of Herakles, Tiryns is so prominent that we can hardly avoid considering it as the earliest capital of the country, probably settled and fortified by invaders who came from the sea, and ruled till they or some rival race founded and fortified Mykenæ, evidently to defend the head of the plain, so that the principal danger then lay not seawards, but towards the mountains of

Corinth. It is probable that at this time forest and perhaps careful irrigation made the head of the valley the most fertile part, whereas, when the trees of the hills were cut down, and the irrigation was neglected, the centre of gravity, agriculturally, moved down to Argos, near the sea, which Homer calls *very thirsty*—why I know not, seeing that the plain is watered by two rivers, considerable for that country, the Inachus and Erasinus, and that the coast between Argos and Tiryns was always marshy, so that even the legends place there the famous swamps of Lerna, with its horrible hydra, which Herakles slew.

Thus Argos succeeded to the heritage of both Tiryns and Mykenæ, and destroyed these cities, for the purpose of unifying or centralising the power, probably under the royalty of Pheidon, somewhere in the seventh century B.C. Late Greek writers have spread the notion that Mykenæ and



GOLD CUPS FOUND BY DR. SCHLIEMANN IN TOMBS AT MYKENÆ.

Tiryns lasted till after the Persian wars, because citizens from both are named in the catalogue of the Greeks who conquered, both by Herodotus and on a tripod inscription recovered at Constantinople, which was actually contemporary. But I was able to show that these were only a few loyal exiles, magnified in importance because of their loyalty to Greece, when Argos took the Persian side, or behaved with mean neutrality. I also pointed out that Æschylus, the patriotic poet who fought at Marathon and Salamis, who must have shared in the general ill-will against Argos, nevertheless knew so little about Mykenæ, that he violates all Homeric tradition, and lays the scene of his great dramas about Agamemnon at Argos, while he never even once mentions Mykenæ. This proves so clearly that Argos did not conquer and raze that city in consequence of the part she took in the Persian wars, that I predicted to Dr. Schliemann, when commencing his excavations, that he would find neither inscriptions, nor coins, nor any



other of those many objects which existed in every Greek town after the year 500 B.C. The results verified exactly these predictions. All the treasure, all the stone carvings, all the ornaments found there were strictly pre-historic, or so archaic as to be rather pre-Homeric than post-Persian in character. But I must descend from these speculations to some easier details.

The famous lion-gate at Mykenæ was a thing long cited and admired, though the later Greeks, such as Pausanias and Strabo, seem either not to know it or to neglect it. But this massive portal, with its strange heraldic lions over the great lintel, with its ashlar masonry of great squared stones, showed plainly enough that here had once dwelt men who had vast resources of labour under their hands. But it was not till Schliemann's researches that differences were observed in the building of the walls. Most of the circuit was in polygonal or irregular masonry, whereas here the ashlar or rectangular building was actually set as a facing of ruder work behind it, evidently by later hands. It seemed likely, therefore, that this ancient fort had been occupied by successive races, who made improvements in their art of construction. Burrowed into the hill facing Mykenæ were also the famous 'Treasury of Athens' and its fellows—beehive tombs built



A DIADEM OF GOLD FROM MYKENÆ.

with an art fully equal to that of the lion-gate, therefore probably belonging to the same race. Unfortunately this great beehive tomb has long since been rifled, so that we had no evidence of its contents, save that it was coated within with bronze plates, of which some of the fastening nails survive, and that we know there was some ornament in the triangular aperture over the door corresponding to the lion-slab of the gateway. The aperture was intended to relieve the lintel stone of excessive superincumbent weight, and it was filled with a thin limestone slab carved by way of ornament. So far then we feel that a race of splendid builders had succeeded to an older and ruder people, and had either remodelled the older work or built additional monuments in their own style. Thus, in many cathedrals throughout Europe, old Romanesque or Norman work has been cut away, or faced with Perpendicular, with Renaissance, or even eighteenth century classical work, hiding what was really beautiful with what we now feel to have been far inferior, if not positively hideous.

But no one felt this duality of the work at Mykenæ, till Dr. Schliemann, finding within the circuit wall one spot with a deep accumulation of soil, probed this spot, and found first a circuit of upright slabs, then stone slabs which appeared to be sepulchral monuments, and at last, far beneath them, a group of tombs full of treasure, but of a very different construction indeed from that of the famous 'Treasury.' For here the bodies were crammed into a space too small for them, not laid in a great chamber with a high vaulted roof over them, and the offerings or other objects with them were simply thrown in upon them, not laid out, as they would be in a spacious chamber. Not that these objects were either rude or cheap. In the first place, the head and bust of some of the dead were covered with golden masks, while around and over them lay dozens of beautiful gold cups, of which we give specimens on page 159, as well as rosettes of gold, an ox head in gold and silver, bronze swords, cauldrons, and many more objects of various kinds for which the reader must either consult Dr. Schliemann's splendid record *Mykenæ*, or go to the museum at Athens and examine them for himself. But I fear he will not see upon them the beautiful red bloom that astonished us when we first beheld them; for the zealous curators of the Athenian Museum had unfortunately taken to polishing them when I was last at Athens, and so we shall lose that flavour of antiquity so very exquisite, and so suggestive of the fact that no lapse of centuries will cause gold to rust, whereas it reduces silver vessels to mere lumps of oxidised rust. This is the true value of gold, and the reason why the human race has from the first recognised its peerless qualities.

Into the identifications of the bodies with Agamemnon and his family I need not here enter. Nothing was more natural in the first moment of enthusiasm; and yet now that we have been able to reflect over it calmly, nothing seems to me more certain than that the bodies found by



Dr. Schliemann belong to a date far anterior to the Homeric poems, or even to the worthies whose traditions they preserved. For, in the first place, there succeeded, as I have said, another race of great builders, and even in what we know of these latter we cannot identify the dress, the weapons, the manners, the life of the heroes as described by Homer. A huge gap seems to separate the Mykenæ of Schliemann from that of Homer, and but that the consistent epithet of *much golden* is especially applied to it by the poet or poets, we could well imagine the pre-historic greatness of the place to have passed into oblivion, and its Hellenic supremacy to have been a new and distinct growth. But I will not go so far as this; it is enough to assert the superior antiquity of the tombs and their occupants to anything told in Homer.

We must not forget to add that in addition to these deep-sunk earthen tombs, Dr. Schliemann discovered several more beehive tombs in the immediate neighbourhood; proving that the 'Treasury of Athens' was no solitary work, but represented the deposit of one of a line of kings. As the Greek legends describe an earlier family, the Perseids, expelled by the richer Pelopids who came from Lydia, Adler has suggested calling the ruder tombs the Perseid, and the beehive buildings the Pelopid epoch of Mykenæ.

What additional light have we obtained from the subsequent excavation of the sister fort at Tiryns? For this too must be added to the crown of glory earned by our veteran friend, whose book called *Tiryns* is hardly less interesting than his *Mykenæ*. It represents even a superior stage in the art of excavation. For while in his former researches he had mainly occupied himself digging holes, to probe, and then to reach his treasure, the work at Tiryns consisted in taking off layers of soil, by which floors, walls, and so ground plans were disclosed. This is the true method, by which we can find the successive dates of any building, represented by strata; and by this careful process it became possible for Dr. Dörpfeld to reconstruct the whole plan of the palace at Tiryns, which the reader may wonder at in Dr. Schliemann's book.

Did this palace belong to the Perseid or the Pelopid era? To judge from the building of the walls of Tiryns, I should say, the earlier. The giant fort is put together of huge rough stones, certainly not squared, though possibly roughly hewn, to make them fit more easily, and present a face outwards. It has only recently been proved by Dr. Dörpfeld, through these very excavations, that there was once mortar in the interstices, though in all the exposed portions it was long since washed away. The oft-described galleries within the wall, with apertures looking outward made like very rude Gothic arches, seem to have been intended for granaries, perhaps sleeping room for slaves, but not for siege purposes.

Far more interesting than these great walls, with their gate-tower

commanding the approach, which leads up so as to have the right or unshielded side of the assailants exposed to the defenders, is the plan of the palace, on the uppermost part of the rock, which is approached through two separate gates, in addition to the main entrance gate. It is very interesting to note that the so-called temple *in antis*, that is to say, with only two pillars filling the opening left in the enclosing wall, which ends on either side of them in two square pilasters—this simple plan, so common in the older or simpler temples, was copied from the pre-historic gateways evidently universal in early times. Those at Tiryns were partly of wood. The actual gate had a portico looking either way, with an upper cross-beam of wood forming the architrave, and supported by two pillars of wood, set on stone



PELASGIC MASONRY AT TIRYNS.

bases, found in their place by Schliemann. The side walls were of sun-dried bricks, and to protect the face or end which was next the pillars, it was cased in wood—the prototype of the square pilasters which stand outside either pillar, forming the frame of the wide aperture in the front wall which forms the entrance. Within these gates were floors, stamped hard, of clay, on some of which were rude designs, and inside the court, one great chamber, with evidences of a hearth in the middle for the men; detached from it, and not easily accessible, was a similar chamber intended for the ladies. The upper stories, being all of wood, and the roofs—which consisted, no doubt, as they now do through remoter Greece, of reeds and shingle, laid flat upon wooden beams and laths—are totally gone. But on some of the walls were rude but handsome ornaments, especially rosettes, in



that blue glass paste which we still find in Egypt, and which is alluded to by Homer. There was even a bath-room found, of which the floor was made of one stone, twelve feet by nine, with a raised edge, into which upright wooden panels were set, to withstand the splashing of the walls; and in the midst, the fragments of a large terra-cotta tub, in which the kings of Tiryns, or their guests, bathed. A hole pierced in the stone floor, with a pipe leading through the building outward, made the use of this room quite unmistakable. These are only a few of the many curiosities found at Tiryns, and destined to make its excavation one of the most important performances in recent archæology.

There were, then, once in Argos great kings, living in strong palaces, as Homer described them, and in considerable luxury, being furnished not only with what the country could produce, but with the luxuries of foreign trade,

amber, gold, ornaments of Egyptian and Oriental manufacture, even ostrich eggs, of which a fragment was found at Mykenæ. Let the reader remember that the amber came from the North Sea or Baltic, the ostrich egg from far inland in Africa, and he will see that even in those remote days, a thousand years or more before Christ, there was that



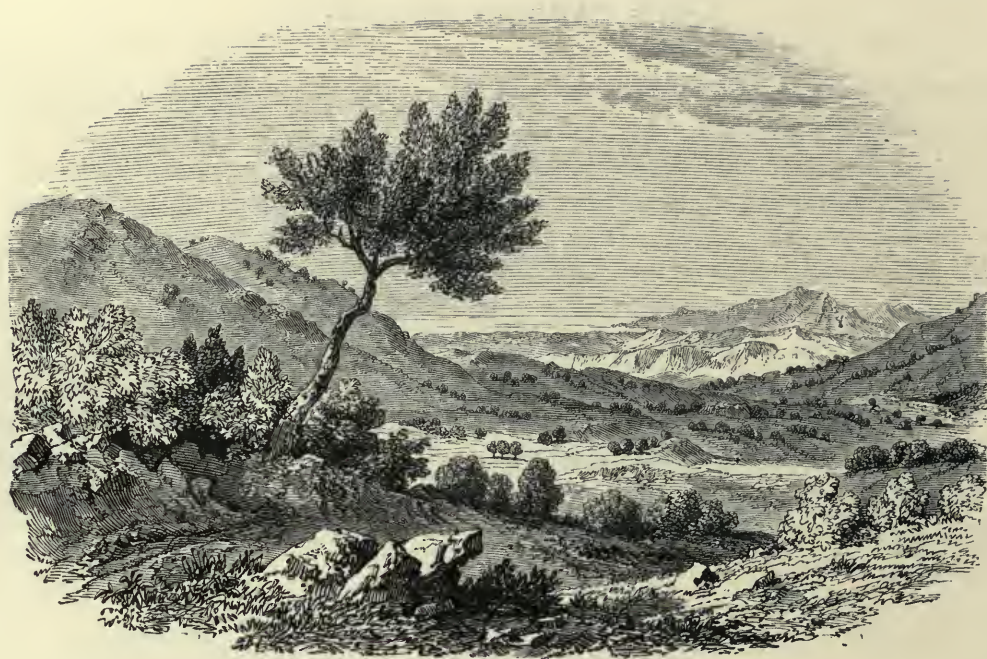
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lively traffic by caravans, and by ships, which meet us in the Bible narrative of the lives of the earliest patriarchs. The old Greek legends consistently ascribe this early Argive power and civilisation to foreign and Oriental invaders. There seems little reason to doubt the truth of this impression. We know that the Phœnicians discovered and developed trade in the Mediterranean by means of their ships, and it is more than likely that the so-called kingdom of Minos in Crete, that great island fortress in the Southern Levant, with its mighty mountain tops in their snow the beacon for southern sailors, symbolises the first empire of these traders in the tents of Javan. Nothing was more natural, when they crept up the bleak and barren coast from Malea, which affords no refuge for ships, that they should hail with delight the first great open bay, with good anchorage and rich lands lying close to the sea. Thus the earliest forts of the invaders from the

south-east would most naturally be placed in the very district where we find these pre-historic castles.

It was formerly our great difficulty to fill the supposed gap between the days of Homer and the first dawn of real Greek history—a gap imagined to be three centuries wide. It is now our difficulty to fill, not this gap, which we have reduced to very small dimensions, but the gap which separates the Homeric civilisation from what went before. For we have now discovered an early culture so different from what is known as Greek, that it is indeed hard to realise how Greek art and its style were developed from such beginnings. Oriental affinities are plain enough; what we desire to learn, and some day we shall learn it, is the gradual progress from the art of Tiryns and Mykenæ to the archaic art of the Parthenon contemporary with the Persian wars.





THE PLAIN OF MESSENE.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### SPARTA, MESSENE, MAINA, AND ARCADIA.

THERE are various ways of approaching Sparta, though in old days its great military strength consisted in not being accessible to an army except down the narrow and easily defended valley of the Upper Eurotas. Now, in the days of peace, you can either go by sea to Gythium, the old port, and drive on a good carriage road, nay, even in a diligence, in five hours to New Sparta; or else you can approach it from Kalamata in Messene, by coming through the splendid Langada pass in Mount Taygetus, or else of course you may approach by any of the northern paths till you come to Sellasia, the site of the great battle where Macedon finally overcame the power of Sparta (221 B.C.), and follow down the Eurotas into the famous and rich valley of the old stronghold of Greek aristocracy. For at no time could any other Greeks pretend to the dignity of Spartan nobles. They stood, like the English gentleman in Europe, perhaps disliked, envied, ridiculed, but still the type which every foreigner is proud to adopt, and which he secretly admires.



THE VALLEY OF SELASIA.







As we have now been dallying in Argos, it will perhaps be most suitable that I should repeat the experiences I had in 1884, when I passed by way of Astros into Sparta.

‘The morning was perfectly fair and calm, and the great mountain chains of the coast were mirrored in the opal sea, as we passed the picturesque rocky fort, which stands close to Nauplia in the bay, the residence of the public executioner. The beauty of the Gulf of Argos never seemed more perfect than in the freshness of the morning, with the rising sun illuminating the lofty coasts. Our progress was at first by the slow labour of the oar; but as the morning advanced, there came down a fresh west wind from the mountains, which at intervals filled our lateen sail almost too well, and sent us flying along upon our way. In three hours we rounded a headland, and found ourselves in the pretty little bay of Astros.

‘Of course the whole population came down to see us. They were apparently as idle, and as ready to be amused, as the inhabitants of an Irish village. But they are sadly wanting in fun. You seldom hear them make a joke or laugh, and their curiosity is itself curious from this aspect. After a good deal of bargaining we agreed for a set of mules and ponies to bring us all the way round the Morea, to Corinth if necessary, though ultimately we were glad to leave them at Kyparissia, at the opposite side of Peloponnesus, and pursue our way by sea. The bargain was eight drachmas per day for each animal; a native, or very experienced traveller, could have got them for five to six drachmas.

‘Our way led up a river-course, as usual, through fine olive trees and fields of corn, studded with scarlet anemones, till after a mile or two we began to ascend from the level of the coast to the altitudes of the central plateau, or rather mountain system, of the Morea. Here the flora of the coast gave way to fields of spurge, hyacinths, irises, and star-of-Bethlehem. Every inch of ascent gave us a more splendid and extended view back over coasts and islands. The giant tops of the inner country showed themselves still covered with snow. We were in that district, so little known in ancient history, which was so long a bone of contention between Argos and Sparta, whose boundaries seem never to have been fixed here by any national landmark. When we had reached the top of the rim of inland Alps, we ascended and descended various steeps, and rounded many glens, reaching in the end the village of Hagios Petros, which we had seen before us for a long time, while we descended one precipice and mounted another to attain our goal.

‘We were accommodated as well as the worthy demarch could manage for the night; and early in the morning we climbed up a steep ascent to obtain the high plateau, very bleak and bare, which is believed by the people to have been the scene of the conflict of Othryades and his men



with the Argive three hundred. A particular spot is still called *στοὺς φονευμένους*, "the place of the slain." The high plain, about 3500 feet above the sea, was all peopled with country folk coming to a market at Hagios Petros; and we had ample opportunity of admiring both the fine manly appearance and the excellent manners of this hardy and free peasantry. The complex of mountains in which they live is the chain of Parnon, which ultimately extends from Thyreatis, through Kynuria, down to Cape Malea, but not without many breaks and crossings. The heights of Parnon (now called Malevo) still hid from us the farther Alps of the inner country.

'After a ride of an hour or two we descended to the village of Arachova, much smaller and poorer than its namesake in Phocis, and thence to the valley of a stream now called Phonissa, the murderess, from its dangerous floods, but at the moment a pleasant and shallow stream. Down the narrow bed of this stream we went for hours, crossing and recrossing it, or riding along its banks, with all the verdure gradually increasing with the change of climate and of shelter, till at last a turn in the river brought us suddenly again in sight of the brilliant serrated crest of Taygetus, glittering with its snow in the sunshine. Then we knew our proper landmark, and felt that we were indeed approaching Sparta.'

The greatness of Sparta is plain enough in Homer, where Menelaus, its king, plays such a prominent part, not only as the innocent cause of the great war in the *Iliad*, but as the master of a refined and luxurious court, which Telemachus visits in the *Odyssey*, where he finds the king, with his recovered wife, now tempered with afflictions and saddened with regrets, still holding her position as the peerless and semi-divine Queen of Lacedæmon. But before real history commences all this is changed. The Dorians have invaded the Morea, and made Sparta one of their headquarters. The Dorian invaders form a new nobility, to which the old inhabitants are in various subjection, while, strange to say, the royal house is divided between two lines of kings, both alleging their descent from the god Herakles, brothers originally of the same Achæan house, which had a legendary splendour unapproachable by any Dorians. This pedigree of the Spartan kings, which went straight back to Herakles, is an instructive specimen of the manner in which history was woven into myth, without any apparent break, by the early Greek priests and poets. There is a remarkable chapter in Herodotus, where he tells of the curious, antique, and perhaps even semi-Hellenic, customs, with which these unique monarchs or rather duarchs, were honoured.

'The Spartans have given the following privileges to their kings: two priesthoods, that of the Lacedæmonian Jupiter, and that of the Celestial Jupiter; and to levy war against whatever country they please, and no one of the Spartans may impede this, otherwise he falls under a curse:

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 376-381.

when they march out to war, the kings go first, and retire last; and a hundred chosen men guard them in the field: during the expeditions, they sacrifice as many cattle as they please, and take as their own share the skins and chins of all the victims. These are their privileges in time of war.

‘The others, those during peace, have been given them as follows. If any one make a public sacrifice, the kings sit first at the feast, and are first served, each receiving double of whatever is given to the other guests. They have the right of beginning the libations, and are entitled to the skins of the cattle that are sacrificed. At every new moon, and on the seventh day of the current month, a perfect victim is presented to each of them at the public charge, for the Temple of Apollo; and a medimnus of meal, and a Laconian quart of wine. At all public games they have seats appointed, by way of distinction; and it is their prerogative to appoint such citizens as they please to be Proxeni, and also to choose each two Pythii. The Pythii are persons who are sent to consult the oracle at Delphi, and are maintained with the kings at the public charge. When the kings do not come to the banquet, two measures of flour and a cotyle of wine are sent home to each of them; but when they are present, a double portion of everything is given them, and when invited to a banquet by private persons, they are honoured in the same manner. They have the keeping of the oracles that are pronounced, but the Pythii are also privy to them. The kings alone have to determine the following matters only: with respect to a virgin heiress, who is to marry her, if her father has not betrothed her; and with respect to the public highways; and if any one desires to adopt a son, it must be done in presence of the kings. They assist at the deliberations of the senators, who are twenty-eight in number; and if they do not attend, those of the senators who are most nearly connected with them enjoy the privileges of the kings, giving two votes, and a third, their own.

‘These privileges are given to the kings by the commonwealth of the Spartans during life; and when they die, the following. Horsemen announce through all Laconia what has happened, and women, going through the city, beat a cauldron; when this accordingly is done, it is required that two free people of each house, a man and a woman, should go into mourning, in token of grief; and if they neglect to do so, heavy fines are imposed on them. The Lacedæmonians have the same custom with regard to the death of their kings as the barbarians in Asia. For when a king of the Lacedæmonians dies, it is required that from the whole territory of Lacedæmon, besides the Spartans, a certain number of the neighbouring inhabitants should attend the funeral; when accordingly, many thousands of these, and of the Helots and of the Spartans themselves, have assembled together in one place, they promiscuously, with the women, strike their foreheads vehemently, and give themselves up to unbounded



lamentation, affirming that the king who has just died was the best they ever had. Should one of their kings die in war, having prepared his effigy, they expose it to public view on a couch richly ornamented; and when they have buried him, no assembly takes place for ten days, nor is a meeting held for the election of magistrates, but they mourn during those days.

'They also resemble the Persians in this other respect: when on the death of a king another king is appointed, he, on his accession, releases whatever debts may be due from any Spartan to the king or the public; so, among the Persians, a newly-appointed king remits to all the cities the arrears of tribute then due.

'In this respect also the Lacedæmonians resemble the Egyptians: their heralds, musicians, and cooks, succeed to their fathers' professions; so that a musician is son of a musician, a cook of a cook, and a herald of a herald; nor do others, on account of the clearness of their voice, apply themselves to this profession, and exclude others; but they continue to practise it after their fathers. These things, then, are so.'

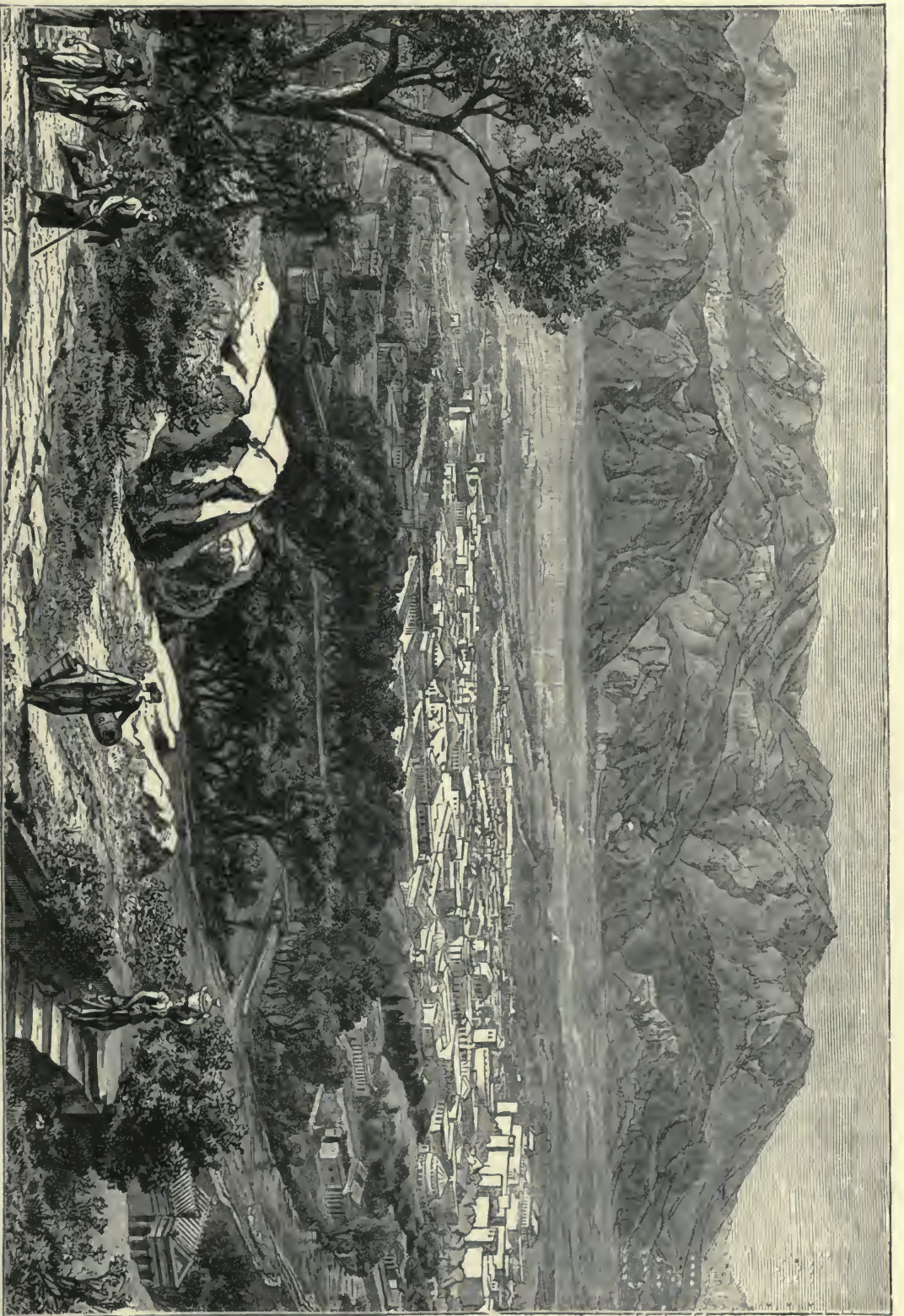
Sparta is widely known as the city of Lycurgus and of his discipline; but there is evidence that before this severe simplicity was introduced, finer manners and greater luxury prevailed, especially at the court of the kings, for we have in Alcman a poet, naturalised from Asia Minor, from the rich Sardis, and composing for the Spartans poetry anything but suited to the sobriety of historical Sparta.<sup>2</sup> And this poet is reported to have lived long after the date of Lycurgus, who is placed before 776 B.C., whereas the poet is placed about 600. This proves to me, what is in itself very probable, that the Sparta of Leonidas was a gradual growth in severity and strictness, becoming rude to affectation with the gradual increase of the power of the ephors, who, like the Venetian Council of Five, became lords even over the nominal heads of the state. Every reform failed while this pig-headed authority remained in force. It was the first act of the innovator Cleomenes III., the greatest of all the Spartan kings, who was only crushed by the full power of Macedon and Achæa at Sellasia in 221 B.C., to lay hold of and put to death the ephors. He got rid of the second king also; but the execution of the ephors was the first token of a really thorough *coup d'état*.

The great source of all the popular knowledge about Sparta is Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*, in which many details are mythical, many traits of the habits of the Spartan youth exaggerated, but still a picture is produced which has fascinated the imagination of the world. Hardiness in games and sports, frugality in diet, silence and modesty in demeanour, briefness of speech—these were the qualities secured by a strict training in common, and intended for the purposes of war. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vi. 56-60.

Cf. my *History of Greek Literature*, i. p. 170





ANCIENT SPARTA (RESTORED).





was created an infantry unconquered for centuries, a type of aristocrat unequalled in Greece, and a physical perfection which all the athletics of the other Greeks could not attain. For the young Spartans were distinctly sportsmen, and not athletes; they spent their leisure with dogs in the wilds of Mount Taygetus, or in the wild country to the south-east, which reaches down in hill and forest to Malea. The perfection of their training did not, however, include literature, or a proper education in morals, and so the day of their political greatness was also the day of their fall. It was found that the rule of a Spartan *harmost*, or military governor in a subject land, was that of a tyrant, corrupt in money matters, and unfeeling towards his inferiors. They had been too long used to trampling upon Helots and Perioeci at home; they had never been trained to the use of money, or to the self-control required in presence of large pecuniary interests; so that Aristotle, commenting upon the Spartan type, censures it as only fitted to make a soldier, not a free citizen. The case of the women he reports as even worse. Being under no control, treated with almost modern deference by the men, they became so luxurious that, Aristotle says, upon occasion of a hostile invasion they made more confusion by their conduct than the enemy. But this runs counter to the many stories of dignity and heroism in Spartan women with which the later historians abound. The real outcome of all our evidence is that these women, who were allowed liberty and social equality with men, were nobler, chaster, better than other Greek women. If cases of female heroism are quoted, they are generally Spartan; and thus we should have imagined that the rest of Greece might have learned the folly and mischief of that seclusion of women which is a blot even upon Attic culture.

But nothing is more curious than this, that while all Greece envied and admired the Spartans, while it was the greatest distinction to have even a Spartan nurse, while the rudenesses of a Spartan were thought 'better style' than the urbanities of other men, no attempt was ever made by their neighbours to imitate their training or their institutions. The Greeks had more sense than the modern Europeans in these matters. They knew that a successful state is a slow and natural growth, conditioned by special and permanent causes, and that to transplant such a system was absurd. Yet in modern Europe no wretched fragment of a nation attains its independence, but some travesty of English institutions, especially parliamentary institutions, is forthwith foisted upon a populace of totally different ways, habits, and traditions. The empty husk of the Lycurgean discipline lasted with curious persistence through centuries of obscurity and neglect, after Sparta had been finally crushed at Sellasia. The sentimental vulgarity of the Romans, when they succeeded to the Macedonians, was eminently attracted by the fame of Spartan training, and from Augustus to Nero the emperors made the maintenance of the old Lycurgean forms a matter of their special interest.



But this survival was not unique. Pausanias, travelling through the decayed and deserted Greece of the second century A.D., records how here a council, and there a confederacy, here archons, there priesthoods, kept alive—if this fossil condition can be called life—the names and memories of old Greek institutions. So we may imagine the Spartan black broth, made after the antique receipt, served up to Augustus or Hadrian, ephors sitting in a drowsy council, and youths playing at ancient discipline, with contempt and weariness in their hearts.

In the early Middle Ages we hear little of Sparta or of Lacedæmon, save that this province, as well as the rest, suffered from invasions of Goths and settlements of Slavs. When the Franks invaded Greece, a very remarkable family, the Villehardouins, seized this part of the Morea, and built above Sparta that famous and picturesque fort which in the Middle Ages, and indeed till the earthquake some thirty years ago, supplanted altogether the old Sparta. Mistra (the old French for *maîtresse*, mistress town) was fortified on a spur of Mount Taygetus, about four miles west of Sparta; it was adorned with fair Gothic churches and palaces, and surmounted by a fortress still higher up. Twenty years after his conquest, Villehardouin was captured by the new Byzantine emperor, Palæologus, who was recovering his dominion. The Frank was obliged to cede him for his ransom the forts of Mistra and Moembasia, which from that time were strongholds of the Byzantine power till the conquest of the Turks. Still the Villehardouins long kept hold of Kalamata and other forts; and to the pen of one of them, Geoffrey, we owe the famous old chronicle *La Conquête de la Morée*, which is unique in its importance, both as a specimen of old French and a piece of mediæval history. The architecture of the place, begun at a noble epoch by the Latins, was taken up by the Byzantine Greeks, so that we have both styles combined in the curious relics of the now deserted stronghold. For since 1850, when an earthquake shook down many houses, the population wandered to the revived Sparta, which is now a thriving town. But as the old Sparta in its greatest days was only a collection of shabby villages, showing no outward sign of its importance, so the new and vulgar Sparta has no attractions, save the lovely orange and lemon orchards round it, in comparison with the mediæval Mistra. 'The houses are piled one over another till you reach the summit crowned by the citadel, which itself a mountain, is severed from the higher mountains at its back by a deep gorge with a tumbling river. The whole town is now nothing but ruined palaces, churches, and houses. You wander up rudely-paved streets rising in zigzag, and pass beneath arches on which are carved the escutcheons of French knights. You enter courts overgrown with grass, but full of memories of the Crusaders. It is the very home of the Middle Ages. Passing through these streets, now the resort of lizards and serpents, you come upon Frankish tombs, among others that of Theodora Tocco, wife of the Emperor Constantine Palæologus, who died in 1430.

'The Pantagia is the only church well preserved—a Latin basilica, with a portico in the form of an Italian *loggia*, and a Byzantine tower added to it. This building is highly ornamented with delicate carving, and its walls are in alternate courses of brick and stone, while the gates, columns, and floor are of marble. The interior is adorned with Byzantine frescoes of scenes from the Old Testament. Higher up is the metropolitan church built by the Greeks, as soon as William Villehardouin had surrendered the fort in 1263. This great church is not so beautiful as that already described, but has many peculiarities of no less interest. The palace of the Frank princes was probably on the wide *place* on a higher level, where the ruined walls show the remains of many Gothic windows. The citadel was first rehandled by the Greek Palæologi, then by the Turks, then by the Venetians, who, in their turn, seized this mediæval "Fetter of Greece." And now all the traces of all these conquerors are lying together confused in silence and decay. The heat of the sun in these narrow and stony streets, with their high walls, is intense. But you cannot but pause when you find in turn old Greek carving, Byzantine dedications, Roman inscriptions, Frankish devices, emblazoned on the walls. The Turkish baths alone are intact, and have resisted both weather and earthquake. The churches occupy the chief place still, dropping now and then a stone, as it were a monumental tear for their glorious past; the Greek cross, the Latin cross, the crescent, have all ruled there in their turn. Even a pair of ruined minarets remain to show the traces of that slavery to which the people were subject for four hundred years.'

In the last generation this splendid place was totally neglected by travellers for the slight and poor remains to be found about the site of old Sparta; for we know that the traces of temples and of theatres date from the days when the real Sparta was gone, and the city was ruled by tyrants like Nabis, or was in the pay of Hellenistic kings. The later Spartans, even their kings, were so exclusively trained for fighting, that they became mercenaries for any rich employer. So it was that many went to Alexandria, where they met the Jews, and established those curious relations mentioned several times by Josephus, who states that the Jews recognised the Spartans as related in their ancestry to the chosen people. The valley of Sparta is certainly the most beautiful inland place in Greece, and its wealth and fair climate account for the early importance of Sparta before it had been turned into a training-school for soldiers.

Of late years Sparta has been rising in importance, as a field of archæological research. Several quaint old reliefs may be seen in the museum, showing how the early rulers ornamented their tombs, and as I am writing these pages (October, 1889) news reaches us that a splendid pre-historic tomb, with all its ornaments, has been unearthed in the neighbourhood.

<sup>1</sup> Henri Belle, *Voyage en Grèce*, pp. 306–10.



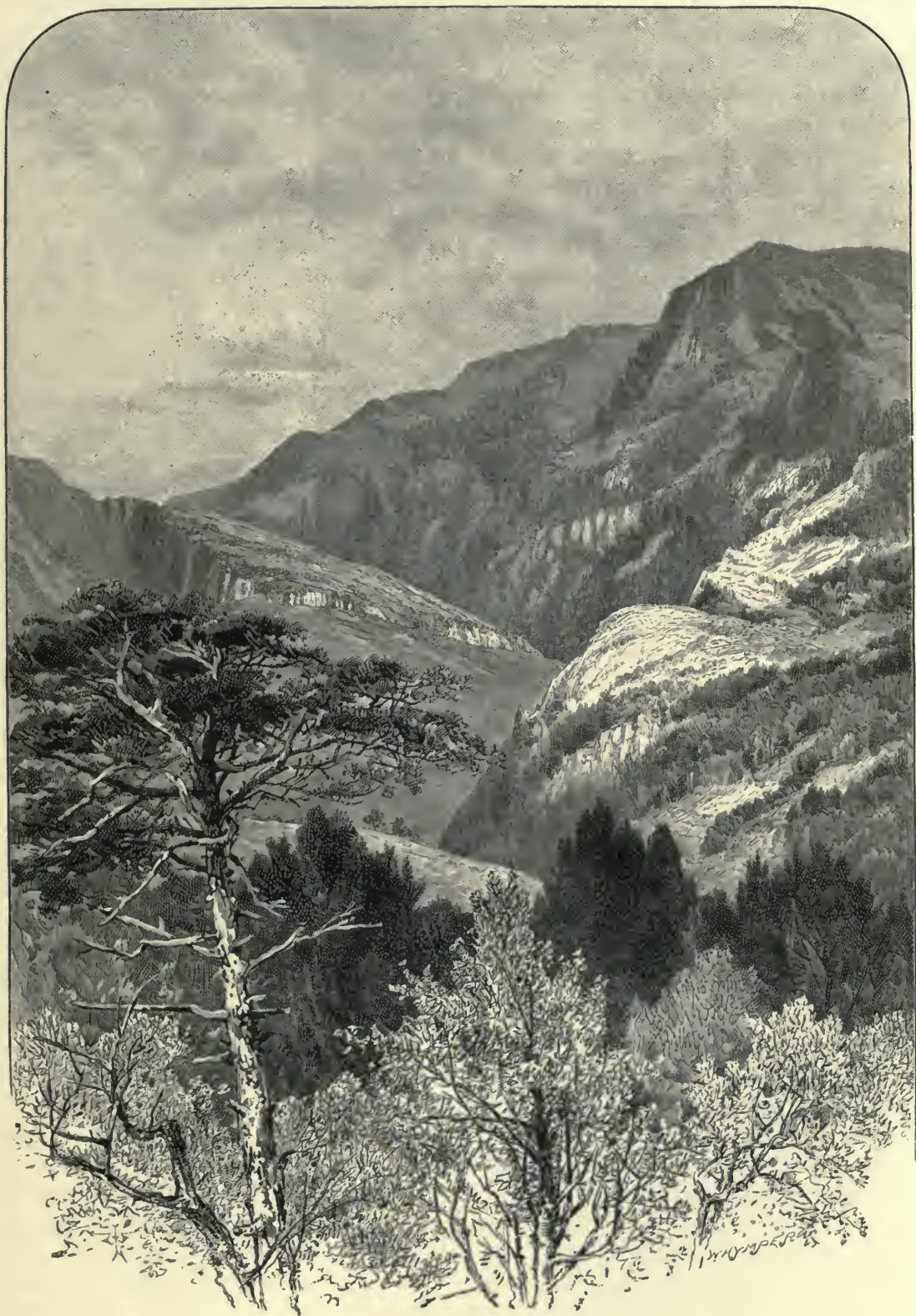
The details are yet so imperfect that I cannot describe this novelty for my readers, but it seems plainly not a relic of what is known as the Sparta of Lycurgus, but of that older and more luxurious town which was changed by the tyranny of the discipline ascribed to that lawgiver.

The exit from Sparta through the great gorge of Taygetus, called the Langgada Pass, is more picturesque than the approach down the valley of the Eurotas. From Sparta itself up to the gorge, through it, and to Kalamata is rather too long a ride, perhaps fourteen hours. On the other hand, recent travellers who have taken the advice of the guide-books, and stopped for the night at Trypi, a picturesque village piled up a steep slope at the mouth of the pass, did not find that picturesqueness an adequate compensation for the exorbitant charges for lodging, charges which amounted to downright robbery. Cases of this kind, though rare, are not unknown in Greece. I remember four of us being asked 118 francs for a night's lodging and supper at Tripolitza, which we got the demarch to reduce to 78; whereas the value received was certainly not 25. These cases show that the bandit spirit, though repressed by M. Tricoupi on the roads, still dwells here and there among the inhabitants; just as I found that Scylla and Charybdis had adjourned from their old lurking-places in Ulysses' time to the harbours of Reggio and Messina, where under the guise of boatmen and ciceroni they still lie in wait for the adventurous voyager. Under these circumstances I should certainly try sleeping at Mistra; there ought to be ghosts of knights and ladies fair wandering in the moonlight about their deserted 'pleasaunce,' and the people would be so taken by surprise by a visitor that most probably they would not think of extortion. It is the guide-book's directions which have raised the intelligence of the people of Trypi to resume their old trade in the mountains.

The pass itself is the most famous in Greece—as famous as, and more frequently visited than the Vale of Tempe, and in its way more beautiful, though it does not boast the splendid trees or the large river of the Thessalian vale. But for colours in the rocks, for fantastic shapes, for beautiful flowers, clothing first the northern slope, and when that is burnt by the fierce sun, passing to the southern slope, which lives in perpetual shade; for picturesque peasant children, reflecting wild Nature in their dreamy eyes, as they climb about the precipices in pursuit of their grotesque goats; in short, for wildness and sweetness combined, there is no spot in Europe more exceedingly beautiful. It has too that appearance of danger which makes mule-travelling so fascinating, and though I never could hear of a case where man or mule was precipitated into the abyss, it is certainly possible at any moment. In fact, in days of snow or storm, the natives will not attempt the pass. So it is that some travellers are brought by a great circuit into Messene, and lose this fairest of Morean sights.

As the entry is sudden, when you go up from the valley of Sparta,





THE LANGGADA PASS.





so the descent into Messene is gradual; you get fine views into the rolling country and the placid sea from far above, as you begin to descend from the highest point of the pass, and you see beneath the broad shallow bed of the Nedon, which enters the sea at the town and castle of Kalamata—now a frequent calling-place for steamers; when I first saw it, a mere roadstead for feluccas, which had perhaps not very long turned from piratical adventure to sober trade. But the resources of Messene are so great that with increasing cultivation this will be one of the chief places for exportation.

The gulf is the Gulf of Koron, and here also, in a deep nook, is a fine Venetian castle, which was no doubt founded or enlarged upon Frankish foundations. But the castle of Kalamata was the first and the permanent seat of the Villehardouins: begun in 1205, the lion of St. Mark over the gate shows that it was occupied in later days by the Venetians. Some day there will be a special book on these fortresses, and Kalamata will occupy a prominent place in it. Unfortunately, there seems to be no trace remaining of the church or chapel which certainly formed a part of the early Frankish settlement; nor is there any convent near, where we might trace the conflict of the Greek and Latin Churches, as at Daphni or at Mistra. But very possibly more careful search, by some expert like Mr. Schultz, of the British School, will disclose remains which the eye of an amateur fails to distinguish. To the latter a very cursory view is sufficient, and he hurries on to see the more historical port or bay of Navarino, or the famous convent of Vourkano, where the hospitality of the monks, combined with the historical interests of the neighbouring walls of Messene, makes the traveller long to abandon all hurry and hide himself for awhile in the recesses of a hidden corner of Europe, beyond the din of railways or the disturbance of telegraphic news. The way up from the coast to this famous retreat leads through the most fertile plain in Greece, where the very southern climate and the warm aspect, together with the natural richness of the soil, suggest what a garden of Eden it might be, as well as what a field of blood and strife it was between the clans of Dorian invaders.

The story of the Messenian wars is among the most picturesque in earlier Greek history; but though the reality of the main facts is attested by the remaining fragments of Tyrtæus, the lame Athenian schoolmaster of the legend, whose lays fortified the failing hearts of the Spartans, few general readers are aware that the usual detailed account which appears in our histories is taken from Pausanias, who wrote it out 800 years after the alleged events from the epic poem of Rhianus, a man of the post-Alexandrian epoch, probably of the second century B.C., and from the prose account of Peisander, which he calls *even more untrustworthy*. This then is not the only piece of Greek history which we have upon the evidence of these Hellenistic authors, who had indeed access to many now inaccessible sources,



but whose historic veracity or perspicacity we cannot now estimate, though we have much reason to suspect them. In but too many of these cases we must content ourselves with the profound remark of Aristotle in his treatise on Poetry, that the pictures represented by (dramatic) poetry are truer philosophically than those of history, because they fasten upon the universal features of human nature under given circumstances, and so tell us what is in a broad sense true for all time. When the state of Messene was reconstituted by Epaminondas, the great Theban leader, all manner of antiquarian glories were brought out of the lumber rooms of the people's imagination, and the Greek public took a keen interest in the reconstituting of Messene, not only as a state to help in counterbalancing Spartan preponderance, but also as a state which had once been on equal terms with the highest, and had sent a series of victors to the Olympic games. All this was duly performed by the literary men of that day, no doubt influenced by Epaminondas; and so we have the heroic adventures of Aristomenes taking their place together with the new fortifications of Messene as an evidence that a famous old Hellenic state, long crushed by the tyranny of Sparta, had at last risen from the dust.

The more one studies the ruins of the walls and towers of Messene, which stretch from Mount Ithome round a large tract of country, the more one is persuaded that there was something exaggerated about the scheme of the great Theban, which the enormous plan of his other (Arcadian) foundation, Megalopolis, makes even more certain. It is fortunate for us that we have one of the Messenian gates tolerably preserved—a fine specimen of Greek military architecture. But this and the long series of towers reaching into the country, and apparently enclosing a circuit of six miles, show plainly that the founder must have miscalculated the number of Messenians that could be recovered from the four winds of heaven whither they were scattered. It is likely enough that many encouraged him with promises to build the new city, who, when it came to the point, would not leave the homes they had already held for many generations. At all events, the whole circuit could never be adequately defended by the inhabitants, and the great ceremony of founding Messene, though a permanent blow to Sparta, resulted in no great benefit to Greece.

Let us mount up from these remains of a brilliant failure to the hospitable convent above, where there seems always ample entertainment for man and beast. The sight is perfectly beautiful, commanding a view of the rich plain of Stenyclerus, and beyond it the serrated tops of Mount Taygetus. All the slope descending from the convent, being watered with many springs, is luxuriant with shrubs and flowers, and about the strong walls of the monastery some dark trees make a very picturesque group in the view. The buildings are unfortunately not old, but restored after a fire during the great war. Still, the aspect of the square court within, with its wooden

galleries and quaint corners, is picturesque enough, were not the place disfigured by a horribly gaudy church, standing, according to the usual design, in the centre of the court. It was painted in scarlet, arsenic green, and blue, after a manner too odious to describe, but excited the pride of the good monks, who showed it as the main ornament of their settlement.

The experiences of all travellers are so nearly alike in these monasteries that I will quote from M. Henri Belle instead of repeating my own words. 'After supper, when they gave us a jar of honey worthy of Hymettus, the *Hegoumenos* (abbot) brought us to the cells prepared for us, apologising that the poverty of the monastery and the wretched condition in which it was left by the government did not allow him to practise a more generous hospitality. My cell was large and airy; the bed consisted of a bench, fitted up beneath with drawers, and a rug. On the table were a few books and a copy of *Pandora*, a selection of modern Greek poems printed at Constantinople in 1843, in which most of the popular melodies which are appended are clearly derived from the Turks. Even the words are frequently adapted from the same source.

'Everything was quiet, save in the neighbouring cell, in which were plainly audible suppressed lamentations, with prayers and quotations. These monotonous sounds made me so impatient that I at last rose up, to try and induce the monk to moderate the transports of his devotion. The door of his cell was open, and a bronze lamp of classic work, with a smoking wick, threw a sombre light through the chamber. There I saw a monk, still young and tall, clothed in a long brown tunic, leaning against the wall, close by a large cross painted in black. His feet together, his hands stretched out, his face raised towards heaven, and clothed as with an aureole by the shock of fair bright hair which reached to his shoulders, his eyes lost in vague ecstasy, he was standing fixed, his lips alone moving to utter sighs and broken sentences, of which I could only catch by their constant repetition this one prayer: "Crucify me, O Lord, and make me suffer a thousand deaths to attain my salvation." His refined pale face, half illuminated by the scanty flame of the lamp, the dark shadows on the wall, everything conspired to enhance the strange pathos of the scene. I could not disturb this mediæval ascetic in the performance of his penitence, or perhaps the fulfilment of his vow; softly I withdrew, and presently his sighs ceased, and intense silence reigned in the convent. Before retiring to rest, however, I stood for a moment at the window, which commanded a view into the plain. The moon showed me the sleeping valley; the mountain seemed as if floating in a soft mist, and toned with a colour mysteriously transparent; rich odours were wafted up from the gardens about the walls, and in the cypresses of the cemetery an owl (the Attic bird of Athene) was sounding at regular intervals its peculiar note, almost as soft as the humming of the moths, which crowded about the lighted window.'



The reader who desires to enjoy a very similar scene, can do so without a journey to Grèce, if he will ascend to the monastery of Monte Cassino, midway between Rome and Naples. There too they will put him

in a cell high up a lofty wall, from which the eye commands a rich valley, with its chains of mountains, with its morning mists, with its pellucid moonlight. And there perhaps he may also find an instance of that remorseful asceticism which M. Belle describes, but which so seldom appears under the sleepy dulness of the monk's cowl. Yet in the very neighbourhood of Vourkano he might have found another striking example of that self-denial which seeks to storm heaven by force, and weary our Heavenly Father into forgiveness by superhuman persistence.

'Far above us, on the summit of Mount Ithome—the site of human sacrifices to Zeus Ithomates in days of trouble—we saw a chapel on the highest top, two thousand five hundred feet over the sea. Here they told us that a solitary anchorite spent his life, praying and doing service at his altar, far above the sounds of human life. We made inquiry concerning the history of this saint, who was once a wealthy Athenian citizen, with a wife and family. His wife was dead, and his sons settled in the world, so he resolved to devote the rest of



A GREEK 'PAPPAS,' OR PRIEST.

his years to the service of God apart from the ways of men. Once a fortnight only he descended to the convent, and brought up the necessary food. On his lonely watch he had no company but timid hares, travelling quail, and an occasional eagle, that came and sat by him without fear,

perhaps in wonder at this curious and silent friend. The monks below had often urged him to catch these creatures for their benefit, but he refused to profane their lofty asylum. So he sits, looking out from his watch upon sunshine and rain, upon hot calm and wild storm, with the whole Peloponnesus extended beneath his eyes. He sees from afar the works and ways of men, and the world that he has left for ever. Is it not strange that still upon the same height men offer to their God these human sacrifices, changed, indeed, in appearance, but in real substance the same?’

Vourkano is about the centre point of Messene; from it we may either go north into Arcadia to visit Bassæ, or north-east to the little port of Kyparissia, recently ruined by an earthquake, or we may turn once more south, to visit not only the wild province or district of Maina, but also the historic bay of Navarino. This latter suits our present plan, and we will go together into this most remote and uncivilised corner of the country. When a stranger enters one of the villages in these wilds, he causes a sort of amazement and disturbance. No one thinks at first of approaching you except the dogs, which fly at the heels of the mules; the children run away as if they had seen a ghost. Some women open a chink of their doors and watch you with a suspicious eye; the men stand upon the threshold without moving, and look at you with a hard and somewhat fierce expression. It is a mixture of shyness and wildness; presently their suspicions are allayed; they drive away their dogs with stones, and their reserve gives way to a sort of familiar and homely hospitality. It must be remembered that the province of Maina was always independent of the Turks, save for the payment of a small tribute, and half a century ago every traveller was regarded as a Turkish spy coming to search out the riches of the land.

A page on the peculiarities of Maina will not be unwelcome to the reader, as it is, next to Acarnania, or in company with Acarnania, the most primitive district of the country. The traveller is struck at once with the curious conditions of these people as compared with other Greeks. ‘While through all other parts of the Morea, especially about Pyrgos, arts, industry, and education are making some progress, these rude mountaineers are, or were till the last year or two, in the same condition as under the Turks. Here you can still find the genuine type of the *klepht*, jealous of his independence, armed against any oppression, rude in manners, not scrupulous as to other people’s property, but defending his own with a determination often attaining to heroism.’ Maina is the southern extremity of the Morea, running out to Cape Matapan, between the spurs of Mount Taygetus and the Gulf of Koron. This corner of the country has been the home of liberty in the most troublous times. It was the refuge of the escaped criminal as well as the oppressed peasant; the Turkish soldiers, strange to say, never penetrated thither, and the pacha governing at Tripolitza was content with a nominal tribute.



You can observe even from the deck of the passing steamer how this district is covered with fortified houses, square towers with parapets—what we imagine French and German castles on a larger scale in the Middle Ages. The local squires with their vassals made war upon one another from these castles, if they had no foreign foe to threaten them. But they formed a sort of military aristocracy, bringing in their train their vassals, for whose conduct they professed to be responsible to the government, though the true ground of their influence is that they participate in the vices and violences of these vassals, whom they do not excel in culture. There is now a *de jure* government of prefects, sub-prefects, demarchs, &c., while *de facto* the old feudal arrangements remain almost intact. King Otho sent in troops to knock down the castles; but the mountaineers rose in arms, and it was too costly to subdue them. For the castles are perched on the top of rocks, from which each captain could watch all the country and collect troops for his defence. The square towers of stone were pierced with loopholes, and each story was reached by a ladder from within, which was drawn up at night. They are still called by the old Greek name *pyrgoi*, and can now be studied by the traveller, seeing that some of them are abandoned to the hawks and owls. It was only very gradually that these wild people could give up the habit of centuries to spend all their time in raids upon the valleys, when under the lawful pretext of pillaging the Turks, they helped themselves to their Greek neighbours' property.

They are still armed with old-fashioned Oriental guns, richly adorned on the stocks, and look about suspiciously as they appear outside their castles. For local quarrels, disputes with neighbours, are always serious enough to keep them on their guard. Any excuse, the cutting down of a tree, the stealing of a goat, excites in these barbarians raging passions only satisfied by shooting and stabbing men, without any attempt of the constituted authorities to repress or punish these violences. Vigorous prosecution of them would forthwith raise the whole district in rebellion, so the government, wisely perhaps, closes its eyes. When once a quarrel is started, revenge—the Corsican *vendetta*—becomes the ruling passion of the Mainotes. It excuses in their eyes every crime, and probably costs more lives than the war with the Turks. Its responsibilities not only pass down from generation to generation, but by marriage into other clans, and most girls bring as part of their dowry three or four murders for their husbands to perform. When a man 'has blood on his hands,' he is ready to undergo any toil and privations. He lies hidden for weeks in the wild brakes during daytime, coming about the villages like a wolf in the night, waiting for his opportunity, and literally afraid to come home till he has killed his man. He then becomes himself subject to a like pursuit on the part of the family of his victim.

These savage qualities are, as in other races, combined with certain

virtues—fidelity to their chiefs, simple hospitality, honour in keeping their word, and a dislike of lies not common in Greece, or indeed in any southern country. Though they would readily murder a stranger for a few shillings, they will receive you like a blood relation if recommended by one of their chiefs, and will give you what they have without tolerating any money repayment. They are unable to resist, however, a present of gunpowder or tobacco by way of gratitude.

Their women, though condemned by the habits of the district to work like beasts of burden, and not allowed to sit down at meals with their idle husbands, still show the same fierce courage as the men, and in the great war distinguished themselves like the legendary Spartans, whom they claim to be their ancestors. They are in a way thoroughly respected, and any violation of the respect due to them is punished by bullets. Indeed, even the most peaceful ceremonies of life, from birth to the grave, are accompanied by discharges of musketry, which resound over the country and produce the feeling that a battle is in progress. Thus when a male child is born, its father goes into the street, or in front of his castle, and fires several shots to announce the news; this is an invitation to his neighbours. They open their shutters (they have no window-glass), and blaze in return. This sort of conversation goes on most of the day. The baby is meanwhile rubbed all over with salt and pepper, mixed. The pappas then cuts some of its few hairs, to stick them on a taper from the altar, which is thrown into the baptismal water, and an amulet is put round its neck to keep it from harm. During its early years, the mother carries it on her back in a sort of bag of sheep-skin, hanging the bag to a tree in the fields, to a nail at home, when she is at work, and singing to it the famous murders committed by its ancestors. At the age of ten, the father begins to teach it to shoot straight first at birds and hares; but there is not much pains taken to teach the difference between shooting a hare and shooting a man.

We may mention, in conclusion, that, owing to internal dissensions, a chief called George Comnenus, with his followers, left his wilds in the year 1675, and begging a new home from the republic of Genoa, was granted lands at Paomia in Corsica. They there turned to agriculture, and became so prosperous that the French rewarded them, in 1768, with additional lands at Cargère. Here there still remain the Greek customs, language, faith, and ritual. These chiefs were recognised by Louis XIV. as descendants of the Comneni, the Byzantine emperors. These Corsican Mainotes have even recently formed a new colony in the province of Constantine in French Algiers.<sup>1</sup>

I have dwelt long on the wilds of Maina, and yet I feel that still we cannot leave the province of Messene without saying something of the famous bay, which under three names, Pylos, Sphacteria, Navarino, has been so famous in Greek history. Every one who reads Homer remembers

<sup>1</sup> Henri Belle, *op. cit.* p. 351.



the veteran Nestor, King of Pylos, with his sage advice and his long-winded stories, with his fatherly hospitality to Telemachus, and his affectionate sons. The leaders of the great colony to Ionia in Asia Minor were reputed scions of his house—Neleids; and great families at Ephesus traced their descent from Nestor, when Pausanias saw them, a thousand years after his accredited date.

We come next to the famous narrative in the fourth book of Thucydides, who tells how the Spartans encamped on the island of Sphacteria, which lies across the mouth of the bay, making it from an open roadstead into a spacious harbour, were cut off from all communication with the shore by the Athenian fleet, under the gallant Demosthenes, and closely besieged and ultimately killed or captured by a larger force sent out under Cleon. This was the moment for the Athenians to have made a favourable peace, for the Spartans valued these citizens, and Spartan captives were a very rare article to give in exchange for favourable conditions. But these things and their sequel may be read in Thucydides.

We come thirdly to the affair of Navarino, an event recent enough to have a familiar name, while most people have forgotten the circumstances. Indeed, this and the bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth were the only naval actions fought by England during the long peace which lasted, 1815–48, throughout Europe, and they were both hardly within the limits of Europe. For Turkish country any more than Algerian can hardly be called European in the general sense which that term implies, beyond mere geographical lines. The Greek insurrection had been dragging its long agony ever since 1821, tales of cruelty and horror were spreading through the press of England and France, Byron had stimulated all the romance of the rising generation into strong sympathy with the oppressed Greeks, when the Sultan bethought him of ending the war by a treaty with Mehemet Ali, ruler of Egypt, by which Mehemet's son, Ibrahim Pasha, was to land an army of Egyptians in the Morea, and subdue it for the Sultan. Ibrahim was a capable general, and, moreover, the black troops of Egypt (not the *fellahin*) had been disciplined by French officers, exiled after the restoration of the Bourbons to France. Finlay, the philosophical Hellene historian, who spent years helping the Greeks in their well-nigh hopeless struggle, saw at once that this disciplined army, under perfect control, must soon end the war. As a matter of fact, between the end of 1825 and 1827, the Morea was completely subdued. But the reports of Turkish and Egyptian cruelties increased, and above all, the conviction that a large part of the subdued Hellenes were being carried away into Turkey and Egypt as slaves. The indignation at this, combined with Russian intrigues to humble Turkey, produced that curious campaign, in which Admiral Codrington was instructed to prevent the re-victualling of the Egyptian fleet and army in the Morea, and consequently to observe the Turkish fleet, which they found in the Bay of Navarino.

The murder of an English officer with a white flag in his boat, who was bringing a message to the Turks, brought on the action, which would have been forced on in any case by the Russians and French. The Turkish fleet was practically destroyed by powers which had not declared war—so much so, that in the next opening of Parliament the great victory was spoken of as *an untoward event*, and Ibrahim was allowed to ship off 2000 Greek slaves to Egypt. It was the bolder action of the French, who landed 14,000 men the next year under Marshal Maison, which really forced the Egyptian prince to evacuate the Morea. We have an affecting description of its condition from Chateaubriand, who landed there in 1831, on his way from Paris to Jerusalem. I will only mention a single fact from his account of the desolated country, in which the French troops only were making some efforts towards the re-establishing of roads and communications. When he landed, he noticed many little children led about by their elder brothers and sisters because they were blind. Upon inquiring into the cause, he found that the Egyptian soldiers had poked out their eyes by way of vengeance, when they found their victories baulked by the interference of the European powers.

Ibrahim, indeed, was very unfortunate in having his successes reversed by external interference. In a brilliant campaign against the Sultan, a few years later, he showed that he could easily have marched across Asia Minor, and taken Constantinople, had not the powers again interfered, and put off him and his ambitious father, Mehemet Ali, with the independent sovereignty of Egypt. But these things are beyond the scope of our present horizon. I will only add in conclusion that M. Henri Belle, when he visited Navarino in 1880, could see the remains of the Turkish vessels lying on the bottom through the clear water of the bay.

From the earliest days there had been a close friendship between Messenians and Arcadians, doubtless on account of the common danger they incurred from Spartan ambition. In the old Messenian wars, Arcadians were ever the supporters and hosts of the exiled Messenians, and the treachery of an Arcadian king to his allies was made the subject of a great national indignation. Yet while the inhabitants of the 'Happy Valley' and the rich vale of Stenyclerus succumbed to Spartan valour, the hardier Arcadians fought out their independence, and maintained themselves, especially in the town of Tegea, as a distinct member of the Hellenic race. The narrative of the early conflicts with Sparta is told with great picturesqueness by Herodotus, in a passage so characteristic that I will quote it for the reader.

'Thus the Spartans, having changed their laws, established good institutions in their stead; and having erected a temple to Lyncurgus after his death, they held him in the highest reverence. As they had a good soil and abundant population, they quickly sprang up and flourished. And now they were no



longer content to live in peace; but proudly considering themselves superior to the Arcadians, they sent to consult the oracle at Delphi, touching the conquest of the whole country of the Arcadians; and the Pythian gave them this answer: "Dost thou ask of me Arcadia? thou askest a great deal; I cannot grant it thee. There are many acorn-eating men in Arcadia who will hinder thee. But I do not grudge thee all; I will give thee Tegea to dance on with beating of the feet, and a fair plain to measure out by the rod." When the Lacedæmonians heard this answer reported, they laid aside their design against all Arcadia; and relying on an equivocal oracle, led an army against Tegea only, carrying fetters with them, as if they would surely reduce the Tegeans to slavery. But being defeated in an engagement, as many of them as were taken alive were compelled to work, wearing the fetters they had brought, and measuring the lands of the Tegeans with a rod. Those fetters in which they were bound, were, even in my time, preserved in Tegea, suspended around the temple of Alean Athene.

'In the first war, therefore, they had constantly fought against the Tegeans with ill success; but in the time of Cræsus, and during the reign of Anaxandrides and Ariston at Lacedæmon, they had at length become superior in the war, and they became so in the following manner: when they had always been worsted in battle by the Tegeans, they sent to inquire of the oracle at Delphi, what god they should propitiate, in order to become victorious over the Tegeans. The Pythian answered, they should become so, when they had brought back the bones of Orestes, the son of Agamemnon. But as they were unable to find the sepulchre of Orestes, they sent again to inquire of the god in what spot Orestes lay interred; and the Pythian gave this answer to the inquiries of those who came to consult her: "In the level plain of Arcadia lies Tegea, where two winds by hard compulsion blow, and stroke answers to stroke, and woe lies on woe. There life-engendering earth contains Agamemnon's son; convey him home, and you will be victorious over Tegea." When the Lacedæmonians heard this, they were as far off the discovery as ever, though they searched everywhere; till Lichas, one of the Spartans who are called Agathoergi, found it. These Agathoergi consist of citizens who are discharged from serving in the cavalry, such as are senior, five in every year; it is their duty during the year in which they are discharged from the cavalry, not to remain inactive, but go to different places where they are sent by the Spartan commonwealth. Lichas, who was one of these persons, discovered it in Tegea, both meeting with good fortune and employing sagacity. For as the Lacedæmonians had at that time intercourse with the Tegeans, he, coming to a smithy, looked attentively at the iron being forged, and was struck with wonder when he saw what was being done. The smith, perceiving his astonishment, desisted from his work, and said: "O Laconian







THE BATTLE-FIELD OF TEGEA.



stranger, you would certainly have been astonished, had you seen what I saw, since you are so surprised at the working of iron. For as I was endeavouring to sink a well in this enclosure, in digging, I came to a coffin seven cubits long; and because I did not believe that men were ever taller than they now are, I opened it, and saw that the body was equal to the coffin in length; and after I had measured it, I covered it up again." The man told him what he had seen; but Lichas, reflecting on what was said, conjectured from the words of the oracle, that this must be the body of Orestes; forming his conjectures on the following reasons: seeing the smith's two bellows, he discerned in them the two winds, and in the anvil and hammer the stroke answering to stroke, and in the iron that was being forged the woe that lay on woe; representing it in this way, that iron had been invented to the injury of man. Having made this conjecture, he returned to Sparta, and gave the Lacedæmonians an account of the whole matter. They, having brought a feigned charge against him, sent him into banishment. He then, going back to Tegea, related his misfortune to the smith, and wished to hire the enclosure from him; but the smith would not let it. But in time, when Lichas had persuaded him, he took up his abode there; and having opened the sepulchre and collected the bones, he carried them away with him to Sparta. From that time, whenever they made trial of each other's strength, the Lacedæmonians were by far superior in war; and the greater part of Peloponnesus had been already subdued by them.'

The high plain of which the territory of Tegea is the southernmost end, commanding the passes down to Sparta, is a large oval, with Tripolitza near the centre, while Mantinea further north, so celebrated for its battles, is another focus of this ellipse. Though this plain of Tegea and Mantinea is rich arable land, it is very high and cold, some 2000 feet over the sea, while the plain of Megalopolis, another oval lying due west of it, is somewhat larger and much warmer. But, strange to say, this better valley had no remarkable city within it, till Epaminondas, whose foundation of Messene has been already mentioned, completed the fettering of Sparta by gathering all the Arcadians of the western plain into the great new city Megalopolis, which was to act as Tegea did, for a barrier against Spartan attempts to break out of the valley of the Eurotas. Thus the Arcadians began to take a leading part in Greek politics, and from that day onward the ten thousand men of Arcadia are an assembly which figures in the Greece of Polybius, and which produced many of the greatest men in the sunset of Hellenic history. For throughout the great days of Athens and of Sparta, Arcadia had been regarded as a retreat for wolves and bears, the home of old-fashioned and hardy mountaineers, who were glad to leave their sterile and wintry mountains for the purpose of enjoying other people's good things, even at the risk of their own lives. For they were always the typical mercenaries of Greece, ever

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 66-68.



since Agamemnon supplied them with ships, and took them to help him in the Trojan War.

This description may seem strange to the modern reader, who associates Arcadia with the loves of shepherds and pastoral delights, with sweet music and gentle shade, with peace and harmony, not with rugged conflict and mercenary service. This now accepted notion of Arcadia is distinctly unhistorical, and even opposed to what we can prove from history and from personal inspection; and at the time when I first began to write about Arcadia, I took no little trouble to find out the time and the cause of this curious and striking change. Such falsifications of history are very curious, and I will quote what I have formerly published on the subject.

‘It appears that from the oldest days the worship of Pan had its home in Arcadia, particularly about Mount Mænalus, and that it was already ancient when it was brought to Athens at the time of the Persian wars. The extant hymn to Pan among the Homeric hymns, which may have been composed shortly after that date, is very remarkable for its idyllic and picturesque tone, and shows that with this worship of Pan were early associated those trains of nymphs and rustic gods, with their piping and dance, which inspired Praxiteles inimitable Faun. These images are even transferred by Euripides to the Acropolis, where he describes the daughters of Aglauros dancing on the sward, while Pan is playing his pipe in the grotto underneath.’ Such facts seem to show a gentle and poetical element in the stern and gloomy mountaineers, who lived, like the Swiss of our day, in a perpetual struggle with Nature, and were all their lives harassed with toil, and saddened with thankless fatigue. This conclusion is sustained by the evidence of a far later witness, Polybius, who in his fourth book mentions the strictness with which the Arcadians insisted upon an education in music, as necessary to soften the harshness and wildness of their life. He even maintains that the savagery of one town (Kynætha) was caused by a neglect of this salutary precaution. So it happens that although Theocritus lays his pastoral scenes in the uplands of Sicily, and the later pastoral romances, such as the exquisite *Daphnis and Chloe*, are particularly associated with the voluptuous Lesbos, Vergil, in several of his *Eclogues*, makes allusion to the musical talent of Arcadian shepherds, and in his tenth brings the unhappy Gallus into direct relation to Arcadia in connection with the worship of Pan on Mænalus. But this prominent feature in Vergil—borrowed, I suppose, from some Greek poet, though I know not from whom—bore no immediate fruit. His Roman imitators, Calpurnius and Nemesianus, make no mention of Arcadia, and if they had, their works were not unearthed till the year 1534, when the poetical Arcadia had been already, as I shall show, created. There seems no hint of the idea in early Italian poetry; for, according to the histories of mediæval literature, the pastoral romances did not originate until the very end of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ion*, vv. 492, *sqq.*

fourteenth century, with the Portuguese Ribeyro; and he lays all the scenes of his idylls, not in a foreign country, but in Portugal, his own home. Thus we reach the year 1500 without any trace of a poetical Arcadia. But at that very time it was being created by the single work of a single man. The celebrated Jacopo Sannazaro, known by the title of *Actius Sincerus*, in the affected society of literary Naples, exiled himself from that city in consequence of a deep and unrequited passion. He lay concealed for a long time, it is said, in the wilds of France, possibly in Egypt, but certainly not in Greece, and immortalised his grief in a pastoral medley of prose description and idyllic complaint called *Arcadia*, and suggested, I believe, by the *Gallus* of Vergil. Though the learned and classical author despised this work in comparison with his heroic performance on the conception of the Virgin Mary, the public of the day thought differently. Appearing in 1502, the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro went through sixty editions during the century; and so this single book created that imaginary home of innocence and grace which has ever since been attached to the name. Its occurrence henceforward is so frequent as to require no further illustration in this place.<sup>1</sup>

It is equally difficult to penetrate into Arcadia from any quarter, and the country is not marked out by any definite features save those of the two oval plains side by side, surrounded by complicated ranges of mountains. Let us begin with the plain of Megalopolis, bounded towards the south by the territory of that once famous town, of late marked by the modern Leondari, which is now again assuming the classic name. A fresh and silvery river, the Helisson, ran through the old city, and we can still wonder at the enormous proportions of the theatre, which seems really to have been constructed to hold the whole neighbouring population. The guide-books say it could hold 44,000 people. After all the nonsense they have talked about the Athenian theatre, which really could not have held more than about 12,000, I repeat their estimate with great suspicion, but when I was there, and standing where the stage once had been, I was not thinking of exact measurement, and can only say from general recollection that it seemed to me fully twice as large—perhaps even three times—as that of Athens. The seats are now overgrown with grass, and Pausanias tells us that even in his day the streets were in a similar condition. It was, like Messene, far too gigantic in conception. Epaminondas' vaulting ambition overleaped itself; and so the affecting words of Pausanias came true, which I shall quote for the reader.

'Although the *great city* was founded with all zeal by the Arcadians, and with the brightest expectations on the part of the Greeks, I am not astonished that it has lost all its elegance and ancient splendour, and most of it is now ruined; for I know that Providence is pleased to work

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 305-308.



perpetual change, and that all things alike, both strong and weak, both coming into life and passing into nothingness, are changed by a Fortune which controls them with an iron necessity. Thus Mykenæ, Nineveh, and the Bœotian Thebes are for the most part completely deserted and destroyed; but the name of Thebes has descended to the mere acropolis and very few inhabitants. Others, formerly of extraordinary wealth, the Egyptian Thebes, and the Minyan Orchomenos, and Delos, the common mart of the Greeks, are some of them inferior in wealth to that of a private man of not the richest class; while Delos, being deprived of the charge of the oracle by the Athenians who settled there, is, as regards Delians,



TEMPLE OF APOLLO THE HELPER AT BASSÆ.

depopulated. Of Babylon, the temple of Belus remains; but of this Babylon, once the greatest city under the sun, there is nothing left but the wall, as there is of Tiryns in Argolis. These the deity has reduced to naught. But the city of Alexander in Egypt, and of Seleucus on the Orontes, built the other day, have risen to such greatness and prosperity, because Fortune favours them. . . . Thus the affairs of men have their seasons, and are by no means permanent. <sup>x</sup>

From Megalopolis we must turn north-west to visit the famous temple of Apollo the Helper at Bassæ or Phigaleia—the work of Ictinus, the builder

<sup>x</sup> Pausanias, viii. 33.

of the Parthenon, but situated not in a plain, not in a city, not in a thoroughfare, but high up in the wildest part of the Arcadian mountains. When I first visited this wonderful place I was journeying from Olympia, and had spent the night at Andritzena, a modern village of great discomfort. But from whatever side you approach the temple, the general description which I then gave will be found true in the main.

‘The morning, as is not unusual in these Alps, was lowering and gloomy, and as we climbed out of the town up a steep ascent on our patient mules the rain began to fall in great threatening drops. But we would not be daunted. The way led among gaunt and naked mountain sides, and often up the bed of winter torrents. The lateness of the spring, for the snow was now hardly gone, added to the gloom; the summer shrubs and the summer grass were not yet green, and the country retained most of its wintry bleakness. Now and then there met us in the solitude a shepherd coming down from the mountains, covered in his white woollen cowl, and with a lamb of the same soft dull colour upon his shoulders. It was the day of preparation for the Easter feast, and the lamb was being brought by this picturesque shepherd, not to the fold, but to the slaughter. Yet there was some strange and confused suggestion in the serious face surrounded by its symphony of white, in the wilderness around, in the helpless patience of the animal, and all framed in a background of grey mist, and dripping with abundant rain. As we wound our way through the mountains, we came to glens of richer colour and friendlier aspect. The sound of merry boys and baying dogs reached up to us from below as we skirted high up along the steep sides, still seeking a higher and higher level. Here the primrose and violet took the place of the scarlet and the purple anemone, and cheered us with the sight of northern flowers, and with the fairest produce of a northern spring.

‘At last we attained a weird country, in which the ground was bare, save where a sheltered and sunny spot showed bunches of violets with long stalks, hanging in tufts, rare purple anemones, and here and there a great full iris; yet these patches were so exceptional as to make a strong contrast with the brown soil. But the main features were single oak trees with pollard tops and gnarled branches, which stood about all over these lofty slopes, and gave them a melancholy and dilapidated aspect. They showed no mark of spring, no shoot or budding leaf, but the russet-brown rags of last year’s clothing hung here and there upon the branches. These wintry signs, the gloomy mist, and the insisting rain, gave us the feeling of chill October. And yet the weird oaks, with their branches tortured as it were by storm and frost—these crippled limbs, which looked as if the pains of age and disease had laid hold of the sad tenants of this alpine desert—were coloured with their own peculiar loveliness. All the stems were clothed with a delicate silver-grey lichen, save where great patches of velvety, faded green moss spread a warm mantle about them. This beautiful contrast of



grey and yellow green may be seen upon many of our own oak trees in the winter, and makes these the most richly coloured of all the leafless stems in our frosty landscape. But here and there were added among the branches huge tufts of mistletoe, brighter and yellower than the moss, yet of the same grassy hue, though of different texture. And there were trees so clothed with this foreign splendour, that they looked like some quaint species of great evergreen. It seemed as if the summer's foliage must have really impaired the character and the beauty of this curious forest.

'Then we crossed a long flat summit, and began to descend, when we presently came upon the temple from the north, facing us on a lower part of the lofty ridge. As we approached, the mist began to clear away, and the sun shone out upon the scene, while the clouds rolled back towards the east, and gradually disclosed to us the splendid prospect which the sanctuary commands. All the Southern Peloponnesus lay before us. We could see the western sea, and the Gulf of Koron to the south; but the long ridge of Taygetus and the mountains of Malea hid from us the eastern seas. The rich slopes of Messene, and the rugged highlands of Northern Laconia and of Arcadia, filled up the nearer view. There still remained here and there a cloud which made a blot in the picture, and marred the completeness of the landscape.

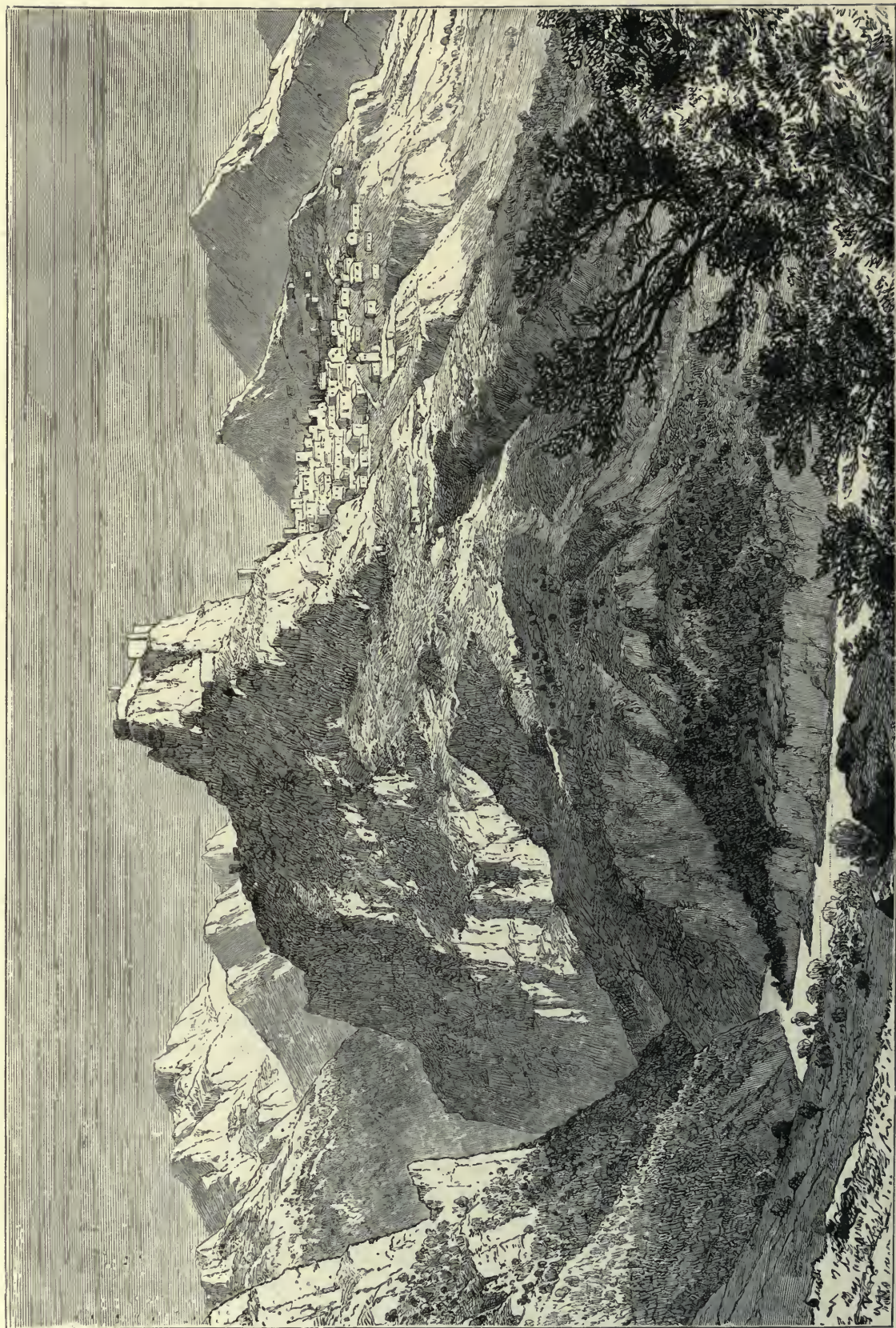
'Nothing can be stranger than the remains of a beautiful temple in this alpine solitude. Greek life is a sort of protest for cities and plains and human culture against picturesque Alps and romantic scenery. Yet here we have a building of the purest age and type set up far from the cities and haunts of men, and in the midst of such a scene as might be chosen by the most romantic and sentimental modern.

'It was reputed in Pausanias' day the most beautiful temple in Peloponnesus, next to that of Athene Alea at Tegea. Even its roof was of marble tiles; and the cutting of the limestone soffits of the ceiling is still so sharp and clear that specimens have been brought to Athens, as the most perfect of the kind. The friezes, discovered years ago (1812), and quite close to the surface, by Mr. Cockerell and his friends, were carried away, and are now one of the greatest ornaments of the British Museum. Any one who desires to know every detail of the building, and see its general effect when restored, must consult Cockerell's splendid work on this and the temple of Ægina.

'The ruin, as we saw it, was very striking, and unlike any other we had visited in Greece. It is built of the limestone which crops up all over the mountain plateau on which it stands, and, as the sun shone upon it after recent rain, was of a delicate bluish-grey colour, so like the surface of the ground in tone, that it almost seemed to have grown out of the rock, as its natural product. The pillars are indeed by no means monoliths, but set together of short drums, of which the inner row are but the rounded ends







KARYTENA.



of long blocks, which reach back to the cella wall. But as the grain of the stone runs across the pillars, they have become curiously wrinkled with age, so that the artificial joinings are lost among the wavy transverse lines, which make us imagine the pillars sunk with years and fatigue, and weary of standing in this wild and gloomy solitude. There is a great oak tree, such as I have already described, close beside the temple, and the colouring of its stem forms a curious contrast to the no less beautiful shading of the time-worn pillars. Their ground being a pale greyish-blue, the lichens which invade the stone have varied the fluted surface with silver, with bright orange, and still more with a delicate rose madder. Even under a mid-day sun these rich colours were very wonderful; but what must they be at sunset?'

Turning back again into the valley of Megalopolis, we find ourselves again in presence of the remarkable fortress which dominates all that plain from the north—the fortress of Karytena, whose history is perhaps as prominent as that of any of the feudal castles. The situation is splendid—mountains piled up in all directions around it, except on the south; torrents separating it from its neighbours, and its peak the highest fortified point in the Morea. It was originally built by Hugo de Brienne, a companion of Villehardouin, and held in fief from him. But, as might be expected, so strong a hold set its owner to think of dominion, and not submission, and it required a formal defeat (at Karydi) to make Hugo return to his feudal duties. His son was that Walter de Brienne who became Duke of Athens, and was killed by the Catalans in Bœotia (above, p. 111). His son Walter, after many adventures, became Lord of Florence, and was killed at the battle of Poitiers.

The castle of Karytena, even in its ruins, has a proud feudal aspect, and was again, early in our century, the stronghold of one of the most famous and notorious of the revolutionary chiefs—Colocotroni. He ranks as a hero in that war, or a brigand, or both, at the moment when brigandage might be a virtue, assassination an act of patriotism, robbery a necessity. So it was that not in spite of, but owing to, his cruelties, his avarice, his vanity, he was able to hold together the mountaineers that knew no discipline, and inflict real defeats on the Turks. He is described as of the Albanian type—tall, lean, but exceedingly strong, with a low retreating forehead, high cheekbones, a hook nose, and eyes glittering with ferocity. He had long been living on the plunder of his own countrymen, when the outbreak of the war set him to the more distinguished task of becoming a general and plundering the Turks. He even hoped to be the first President of the new state, though he could hardly sign his name, and knew no trade except lying in wait behind a rock with his gun to watch for a passing enemy. He ended by being condemned to death, but pardoned into insignificance.

<sup>1</sup> *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 315-322.



Yet in his day he was strong enough to foil even Ibrahim Pasha, who recoiled before the castle at Karytena. For it is perched like an eagle's nest over the present village, with only a single possible ascent along a sharp crest, with steep precipices at either side. The mediæval arrangements, and many souvenirs of the lords of Karytena, must have been almost intact until the time when Colocotroni established his klephts there, who destroyed everything they did not absolutely require, and rebuilt some rooms from materials taken out of the walls of what was abandoned. Over the gate the stone carrying the escutcheon of the house of Brienne has been torn out. So also arms of the knights were found and scattered by the klephts. Far below the battlement two torrents, the Upper Alpheus and the Gortynius, rush round the rock, and make their way into the valley. Even the houses of the village below are built in ascending stairs against the steep rock, with a deep ravine below them. The whole scene is wild and grandiose, far different from the Arcadia of the poets, essentially the Arcadia of history.

It is remarkable that the picturesqueness admired when the men of the Renaissance began to study Nature has now passed away with the recovery of a truer taste, and that the real Arcadia is not less delightful to our minds than was the imaginary one to those of the sixteenth century. It is not very long since the Alps were regarded simply with fear and horror, as hideous wastes of snow hostile to civilisation and to pleasure; rich lawns, well-kept forests, orderly agriculture, strict form in landscape was the only beauty appreciated. The researches of Friedländer have shown that it is not much more than one hundred years since the delights of wild, rugged, majestic Nature have become generally appreciated. Arcadia has been fortunate enough to maintain its reputation under these vagaries of æsthetic taste. The mountains of Phocis and Ætolia are perhaps grander; but the milder climate of the Morea produces in the glens a richer vegetation and a warmer colour; and had the English, in the days of their greatness, instead of being content with Malta and the Ionian Islands, laid hold of the Peloponnesus, it would now be one of the most delightful health resorts in the world. The usual virtues of the mountaineers are developed in these Alps, and nothing seems more like a description of the Swiss or Tyrolese than the account given by Polybius of the peculiar and exceptional savagery of Cynætha, as resulting from the mere force of climate, when not tempered by the careful training in music which is almost universal among mountaineers.

The gloom of some of the Arcadian gorges is indeed enough to make the human heart dark and sullen. There are two such places known by their waterfalls—the Falls of the Styx, not far from Megaspelion, and the Falls of the Neda, not far from Bassæ, which are perhaps unique in Europe. Immense forest trees and rich evergreens people the slopes

wherever soil is to be had. Among them stand out bold rocks, and the river is hidden, if not (as in the case of the Neda) by superposed rocks, at least by such a wealth of vegetation, that only its clear fall through the air is visible. But both these wonderful scenes are very far from roads, very difficult of access, and seldom visited even by the adventurous traveller.



CASCADE OF THE STYX.





VOLO.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### NORTHERN GREECE.

WE have spent so long a time in the Morea, that we must hasten to Northern Greece before we part company, and give the reader some notion of the country north of Attica. It is not smaller or less beautiful than the land we have been surveying; nor is it in some respects less interesting. The Island of Eubœa (Negropont) has often played a leading part in Greek history, and the great battles around its coasts are hardly less celebrated than the conflicts in Thessaly—Thermopylæ, Cynoscephalæ, Pharsalia—which have in one day determined the fate of empires. And yet these northern parts seem somewhat out of the way, and are generally visited last in a Greek voyage. The cession of Volo to Greece by the Turks has indeed curiously added to the difficulties of the traveller. For since Volo has ceased to be a frontier town, its trade has diminished, steamers in the same direction only call every fortnight. It depends upon the size of these steamers whether they go outside or inside Eubœa. In the former case, the traveller has the opportunity of watching the notorious promontory of Caphareus, after he has seen that of Sunium with its snow-white temple. The east side of the famous island was always celebrated for its shipwrecks, since the Greek heroes returned from the Trojan War, since the Persian

fleet tried to surround the Greek fleet in the Straits of Chalcis, since Dio Chrysostom prefaced his delightful idyll of country life by a shipwreck in these ill-famed 'hollows' of Eubœa. But let us rehearse a few of the



VENETIAN TOWER AT CHALCIS.

traditions which make this long-stretched island, with its lofty mountains and its great forests, so famous.

The towns of Chalcis and Eretria stand out in the very beginning of genuine Greek history as famous for mining and for bold navigation, as the



very names—*Metal-town* and *Rowing-place*, as the Greeks probably understood them—would imply. Chalcis was, moreover, remarkable for its proud aristocracy, who kept horses (a distinction of wealth in Greece), but who did not disdain close fighting on foot, and wore long hair, like the Spartans and older Ionians.

We know less of the details of Eretria save, that her colonies were almost as renowned as those of the Chalcidians, and that when the two cities went to war about the Lelantine plain, which lay between them, all Greece, and even Asia Minor, took share in the conflict, so that Thucydides alludes to it as the one general disturbance in Greece before the Persian wars. These latter, however, did irreparable harm, especially to Eretria; for though the fierce rocks of the island avenged themselves on the Persian fleet, the population had been well-nigh swept by the process of 'netting,' which Herodotus describes—a line of soldiers joining hands, and walking straight across the country, catching every inhabitant, or driving him before them, and the people of Eretria were even carried off and settled by Darius in Babylonia.

Chalcis, which was practically the capital of Eubœa ever after, was an important and not very trustworthy dependency of Athens during her greatness. But the days were long gone by when Eubœans could settle great towns in Sicily and on the coasts of Thrace; and when Dio Chrysostom visited, or professed to have visited, this island about the time of the Emperor Nero, he paints its condition as one of a country where grass was growing in the streets of the towns, and where the country people lived again in a perfectly primitive way, partly by rude tillage, partly by grazing a few cattle, partly by hunting the game animals with which the forests and brakes abounded. The town of Chalcis again became important when the Venetians refortified the old bridge or passage from the land, which being divided by a rocky island into two straits, one about eighty, the other one hundred and twenty feet wide, could easily be secured against the passage of ships. The present aspect of the Venetian forts, with the usual lion of St. Mark emblazoned upon them, is very striking. The tide or current in the channel, which always perplexed the ancients, is still not quite explained. There is, no doubt, a real tide, as there is at Venice, but other causes seem to contribute, which modify the regularity of the ebb and flow. Until recently a fixed bridge stopped all boat thoroughfare, but it has been for some years replaced by a swinging bridge—a great boon to the traffic of the town. There are still many traces of the importance of the island in mediæval days. Not only the forts at Chalcis, but many smaller castles high up in the mountains, tell the fact that the land was divided into many fiefs, and held under feudal rights by Frankish knights.

Even in recent days, Eubœa, or Negropont, as the Venetians called it, has been more than other parts of Greece the scene of enterprising attempts

to make a home for intelligent Western agriculture in the Levant. Both English and French settlers, unfortunately isolated, have attempted to turn to account the fine soil and lovely climate of the island, but have hitherto been baulked either by the violence or the sloth of the peasantry. In some cases the settlers were simply murdered, and their property looted by organised bands of brigands; in others every attempt at improvement, such as the introduction of farming machines, was resented by the jealous idleness of the labourers; in others again, the inconceivably mischievous Turkish method of insisting upon the taxation of standing crops, has paralyzed industry. This most stupid and absurd system was absolutely adopted from the Turks by the newly-organised Greek government, and puts into the hands of the tax-collectors a power not less odious, and not less abused than that of the *publicani* under Rome, which was perhaps the main cause of the ruin of the Roman provinces. No peasant is allowed to reap his crop till the tax-gatherer has time and leisure, or some stronger inducement, to examine it; the payment is in kind, and the wretched peasant is bound to deliver it at the government stores, perhaps a long way off, and over miserable roads.

I will not go on with this description, as it is probable that the enlightened rule of M. Tricoupis has already made it antiquated. There still remains another terrible abuse of liberty which does almost as much harm in Greece as the abuse of authority. The wild shepherds who roam about the country with their flocks of sheep and goats set fire to a forest wherever and whenever they like; if any private individual, or even the government, plant a barren district of mountain, they will come and graze it down; and if arrested, the chances are ten to one that no Greek jury or magistrate will punish them. This is the real cause of the wretchedly barren aspect of so many mountains in Greece. No one protects trees, and every one cuts them down or burns them as he chooses. But why should we blame poor savage country people, when the inhabitants of Athens show the same barbarism? All the streets of the new town, which are excessively hot and glaring during most of the year, are planted with trees—usually the very fragrant and beautiful pepper trees, which thrive perfectly, when allowed to grow. But no sooner does one of these trees venture to afford the panting passenger any shade, than its branches are hacked away either by the municipal authorities, or by the nearest resident, apparently lest the streets should become tolerable for a pedestrian.

I think the best adieu we can pay Eubœa is to quote the thrilling narrative of Herodotus upon the desperate struggle which took place round the north headland of the island.

‘The Greeks accordingly remained in Eubœa, and came to an engagement by sea. It happened in this manner. When the barbarians arrived at Aphetæ, in the afternoon, having been already informed that a few Grecian



ships were stationed, and then descrying them at Artemisium, they were eager to attack, in the hope of taking them. However, they did not think it advisable to sail directly upon them, for the following reasons, lest the Greeks seeing them sailing towards them, should betake themselves to flight, and the night should cover their retreat, by which means they would escape ; but, according to their saying, they thought that not even the torch-bearer ought to escape alive.

‘For this purpose, then, they had recourse to the following plan : having detached two hundred ships from the whole fleet, they sent them round, outside Sciathus, that they might not be seen by the enemy sailing round Eubœa, by Caphareus and round Geræstus to the Euripus ; that so they might surround them, the one party arriving in the place appointed in that way, and intercepting their retreat, and themselves attacking them in front. Having determined on this, they despatched the ships appointed for this service, themselves not intending to attack the Greeks that day, nor before the agreed signal should be seen, given by those who sailed round, announcing their arrival. These, then, they sent round, and set about taking the number of the rest of the ships at Aphetæ.

‘At this time, while they were taking the number of their ships, there was in this camp Scyllias, of Scione, the best diver of his time ; he, in the shipwreck that happened off Pelion, had saved much of their treasure for the Persians, and had acquired a good deal for himself. This Scyllias had long before entertained the design of deserting to the Greeks, but had had no opportunity of doing so until that time. In what way he at length made his escape to the Greeks I cannot certainly affirm, and I wonder whether the account given is true. For it is said that, having plunged into the sea at Aphetæ, he never rose until he reached Artemisium, having passed this distance through the sea, as near as can be, eighty stadia. Many other things are related of this man that are very like falsehood, and some that are true. If, however, I may give my opinion of this matter, it is, that he came to Artemisium in a boat. On his arrival, he immediately informed the commanders of the shipwreck, how it had occurred, and of the ships that were sent round Eubœa.

‘The Greeks, having heard this, held a conference among themselves ; and, after much debate, it was resolved, that remaining there, and continuing in their station during that day, then, when midnight was passed, they would proceed, and meet the ships that were sailing round. But after this, when no ship sailed against them, having waited for the evening of the day, they sailed of themselves against the barbarians, being desirous to make trial of their manner of fighting, and of breaking through the line.

‘The other soldiers of Xerxes, and the commanders, seeing them sailing towards them with so few ships, attributed their conduct to madness, and on their part got their ships under weigh, expecting that they should easily take

them; and their expectations were very reasonable, when they saw that the Grecian ships were few, and their own many more in number, and better sailers. Taking these things into consideration, they enclosed them in the middle of a circle. Now, such of the Ionians as were well affected to the Greeks, and joined the expedition unwillingly, regarded it as a great calamity, when they saw them surrounded, feeling convinced that not one of them would return, so weak did the Grecian forces appear to them to be. But such as were pleased with what was going on, vied with each other how each might be the first to take an Athenian ship, and receive a reward from the king. For throughout the fleet they had the highest opinion of the Athenians.

‘When the signal was given to the Greeks, first of all turning their prows against the barbarians, they contracted their sterns inwardly to the middle; and when the second signal was given, they commenced the attack, though enclosed in a narrow space, and that prow to prow. On this occasion they took thirty ships of the barbarians, and Philaon, son of Chersis, the brother of Gorgus, King of the Salaminians, a man highly esteemed in their army. Lycomedes, son of Æschreus, an Athenian, was the first of the Greeks who took a ship from the enemy, and he received the palm of valour. But night coming on separated the combatants, who in this engagement fought with doubtful success. The Greeks returned to Artemisium, and the barbarians to Aphetæ, having fought with far different success than they expected. In this engagement Antidorus, a Lemnian, was the only one of the Greeks in the king’s service who went over to the Greeks; and on that account the Athenians presented him with lands in Salamis.

‘When night came on, and it was now the middle of summer, heavy rain fell through the whole night, and violent thunder about Pelion; the dead bodies and pieces of wreck were driven to Aphetæ, and got entangled round the prows of the ships, and impeded the blades of the oars. But the soldiers who were on board, when they heard the thunder, were seized with terror, expecting that they must certainly perish, into such calamities had they fallen. For before they had recovered breath, after the wreck and tempest that had occurred off Pelion, a fierce engagement followed, and after the engagement, impetuous rain and mighty torrents rushing into the sea, and violent thunder. Such was the night to them.

‘But to those who had been appointed to sail round Eubœa, this same night proved so much the more wild, in that it fell upon them while they were in the open sea; and the end was grievous to them; for as they were sailing, the storm and rain overtook them when they were near the hollows of Eubœa, and being driven by the wind, and not knowing where they were driven, they were dashed upon the rocks. All this was done by the deity, that the Persian might be brought to an equality with the



Greek, or at least not be greatly superior. Thus they perished near the hollows of Eubœa.

‘The barbarians at Aphetæ, when, to their great joy, day dawned, kept their ships at rest, and were content, after they had suffered so much, to remain quiet for the present. But three and fifty Attic ships came to reinforce the Greeks; and both these by their arrival gave them additional courage, as did the news that came at the same time, that those of the barbarians who were sailing round Eubœa had all perished in the late storm; therefore, having waited to the same hour, they set sail and attacked the Cilician ships, and having destroyed them, as soon as it was night they sailed back to Artemisium.

‘On the third day, the commanders of the barbarians, indignant at being insulted by so few ships, and fearing the displeasure of Xerxes, no longer waited for the Greeks to begin the battle; but encouraging one another, got under weigh about the middle of the day. It happened that these actions by sea and those by land at Thermopylæ took place on the same days; and the whole struggle for those at sea was for the Euripus, as for those with Leonidas to guard the pass—the one party encouraging each other not to suffer the barbarians to enter Greece, and the other, to destroy the Grecian forces, and make themselves masters of the channel.

‘When the barbarians, having formed in line, sailed onwards, the Greeks remained still at Artemisium; but the barbarians, having drawn up their ships in the form of a crescent, encircled them as if they would take them; whereupon the Greeks sailed out to meet them, and engaged. In this battle they were nearly equal to one another; for the fleet of Xerxes, by reason of its magnitude and number, impeded itself, as the ships incommoded and ran foul of one another; however, they continued to fight, and would not yield, for they were ashamed to be put to flight by a few ships. Accordingly many ships of the Greeks perished, and many men; and of the barbarians a much greater number, both of ships and men. Having fought in this manner, they separated from each other.

‘In this engagement the Egyptians signalised themselves among the forces of Xerxes; for they both achieved other great actions, and took five Greek ships, with their crews. On the part of the Greeks, the Athenians signalised themselves on this day, and among the Athenians, Cleinias, son of Alcibiades; who at his own expense joined the fleet with two hundred men and a ship of his own.

‘When they had separated, each gladly hastened to their own stations; but the Greeks, when, having left the battle, they had withdrawn, were in possession of the dead and of the wrecks; yet, having been severely handled, and especially the Athenians, the half of whose ships were disabled, they consulted about a retreat into the interior of Greece.

‘But Themistocles, having considered with himself, that if the Ionians

and Carians could be detached from the barbarian, they would be able to overcome the rest; as the Eubœans were driving their cattle down to the shore, he then assembled the Grecian commanders together, and told them that he thought he had a contrivance, by which he hoped to draw off the best of the king's allies. This, then, he so far discovered to them, but in the present state of affairs he told them what they ought to do; every one should kill as many of the Eubœan cattle as he thought fit; for it was better that their own army should have them than the enemy. He also advised them each to direct their own men to kindle fires; and promised that he would choose such a time for their departure, that they should all arrive safe in Greece. These things they were pleased to do; and forthwith, having kindled fires, they fell upon the cattle. For the Eubœans, disregarding the oracles of Bacis, as importing nothing, had neither carried out anything to a place of safety, nor collected stores, as if war was approaching; and so had brought their affairs into a precarious state. The oracle of Bacis respecting them was as follows: "Beware of the barbarian-tongued; when he shall cast a byblus-yoke across the sea, remove the bleating goats from Eubœa." As they paid no attention to these verses, in the calamities then present, and those that were impending, they fell into the greatest distress.<sup>1</sup>

The reader should notice on the map how the apparently random groups of Greek islands are really laid out in fixed groups. The most important group of the Cyclades is the prolongation of the chain of Eubœa, and parallel with it is another series practically of the high mountain tops which run on from the termination of Attica. There is a third group, the Sporades, which goes in an eastern direction, starting from the spurs of Mount Othrys, immediately north of Eubœa, and now marking the limits which divide the Greek from the Turkish waters on the north. So also the chain of Othrys is the great boundary between these hostile nationalities, and indeed a boundary of climate, for north of the rich plain of Thessaly the wild Alps become cold and snowy, so that what grows and flourishes about Volo and Larissa will not live twenty miles to the north.

There is now considerable railway communication through Thessaly, and the day is soon coming when the line will be carried over Mount Pindus across to Dalmatia, and from thence to Trieste. When this is accomplished, not Venice, not Brindisi, not even the convenient Salonica (of which more anon), but the Piræus, will be the port for Suez and the East. The existing railways go from Volo up the two great branches of the Thessalian plain, to Larissa, which brings the traveller within a day's excursion of the Vale of Tempe, and to Trikkala, which brings him towards the central (Pindus) chain of the peninsula, and to the wonderfully picturesque convents of Meteora. The plain itself is not so interesting as other parts of Greece,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, viii. 6-20.





for there are not remaining any splendid ruins, nor was there ever a first-rate Greek city there in the best epoch. In later days, when Macedonian kings and Roman nobles were disputing for the mastery of the world, the plains of Thessaly became indeed famous. Volo is situated somewhere near the site of Demetrias, the city built and named by Demetrius the Besieger, about

300 B.C., the first real king of Macedon after Alexander the Great, who mounted to the throne by the murder of all the legitimate heirs. But of this city we have no remains.

The plain of Pharsalia can be identified, where the hardy veterans of Cæsar de-

feated the proud but effeminate aristocracy led by his rival Pompey. Not very far is the broken country known in antiquity as the Dog's Heads

MOUNT OLYMPUS.



(Cynoscephalæ), where the Macedonian phalanx, which the Romans had not encountered since the invasion of King Pyrrhus, was defeated and destroyed through advancing over uneven ground. The Romans who had fought in the battle told Polybius they had never seen anything so formidable, and there is no reason to assert that the phalanx ever was defeated by another system of tactics under favourable circumstances. Still, Alexander the Great understood so perfectly the difficulties of moving for attack, that he never employed it in his battles, save to keep part of the enemy engaged while he won the battle elsewhere; he is also known to have been breaking it up into smaller and more easily worked formations at the very time that death stayed his further designs.

There were many other campaigns through this country, notably those of the years preceding Cynoscephalæ (197 B.C.), in which the Romans learned to their cost how difficult it was to force passes and storm fortresses held by a determined enemy. But these things must be read in detail in the Roman history.

The modern traveller goes to see two famous sights in opposite ends of Thessaly, the one natural, the other artificial; I mean the Vale of Tempe, and the monasteries of Meteora. The famous vale is where the Peneus breaks through the chain of Othrys, and rushes into the sea in a splendid gorge between Mount Ossa and Mount Olympus. Not only are the surrounding rocks and mountains of this vale very striking, but the forest trees which grow near the water, especially plane trees, are magnificent, not to speak of the forests of willows, wild fig trees, Judas trees, and *agnus castus*, festooned with wild vines, ivy, and clematis. No more beautiful spot is probably to be found in Europe, and now that the Greek frontier has been made perfectly safe by the care of M. Tricoupis and his proper management of the brigand question, no excursion will better repay the labour of penetrating to this remote spot. For you cannot travel on to Salonica on horseback. As soon as you reach the slopes of Mount Olympus, on the other side, the danger from brigands becomes very serious indeed.

The notorious case of Colonel Synge, which happened in 1881, is perhaps not in the recollection of the reader, but it illustrates too clearly the condition of the Greeks under Turkey not to be briefly stated here. This Irish gentleman thought fit to occupy a farm on the northern slopes of Mount Olympus, where he lived with some stout Albanian dependants. The fact that he was a British subject, and a man of social position tempted the notorious bandit and murderer, Niko, to organise a band for the purpose of surprising him, and extracting a large ransom. Colonel Synge had some vague notice of their intentions, but trusted to his followers and to his own resources to resist them. When they attacked his house, he defended himself for some time, but when they proceeded to set fire to it, and



it became necessary to retreat, he had a woman and young children under his care whom he could not desert, and who could not possibly be carried off in a running fight. He was, therefore, compelled to surrender. Some of the Albanians with him were murdered in cold blood, and he was carried off. Negotiations were then started by his writing to the British consul at Salonica, stating that the brigands, under pain of putting him to death with horrible tortures, demanded £15,000 ransom. Agents from the consulate proceeded to parley with agents of the brigands during a period of two months, while all police or military supervision of the district was stopped at the demand of the villains. During this interval twenty-seven honest people are said to have been robbed or murdered by these and other villains, freed from all fear of punishment. The final result, as nearly as I can remember the facts, was as follows. Each brigand of the band of thirty received a gold watch and chain; the £15,000 was paid to them in gold by the English consul (to be recovered from the Turks out of the tribute which the English pay for Cyprus to the Sultan); furthermore, all Niko's friends then in jail under various charges of robbery and murder, which he alleged to be unjust, were liberated. Then Colonel Synge was restored to his friends. Niko retired from his lucrative profession, and was said to be living in one of the Greek islands when I heard the story. In consequence of this affair another Englishman was since seized in Macedonia, and the same ransom extracted; and now no British citizen can pass through that province without fear of a similar fate.

It is common in such cases to talk of Greek brigands, and such no doubt these men were in race. But in justice it should be added that they were all subjects of the iniquitous government of Turkey in Macedonia, and that in no part of Greece has any such outrage happened for many years. As I have said, and as I have repeatedly proved by personal experience, any stranger can travel as he pleases all over Greece, and even up to the Turkish frontier, with perfect safety. This result is attained very easily in any province, Greek or Turkish, by arming the peasants, and putting a price on every brigand's head. To the peasants these people are a great and constant scourge, so that Greeks or Albanians will treat any vagrant as a brigand, and so make the business too dangerous to be a desirable profession in life. The mountaineer who lives in these highlands is very brave, and quite delighted to have a battue even for the most dangerous game. When the inducement of a reward in money is added, the sport becomes a passion with them.

These are the reasons why I (like other people who value their lives and liberty) was obliged to sail up the coast to Salonica, and so lose the splendid scenery of Mount Olympus, which would tempt any lover of the beauties of Nature. Even from the sea the prospect is very beautiful. The long horn of land curving from the north to form the Gulf of Volo is the

ancient and historic Pelion, a long ridge 5300 feet high, with gentle slopes, once the game preserves of the Macedonian kings, where the great Scipio Æmilianus and Polybius had splendid sport after the defeat of King Perseus at the battle of Pydna (167 B.C.). Next to it on the north stands out the higher and steeper top of Ossa (7600 feet), and still further north the magnificent ascending scale is crowned by Mount Olympus, of which the highest top is nearly 10,000 feet, and hardly ever without its cap of snow. Then the traveller, looking from his ship on this splendid view, begins to feel the poetic propriety of piling Pelion upon Ossa, Ossa upon Olympus, as the Titans proposed to do in their attempt to scale the heavens, and displace its hostile monarch.





GENERAL VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL MONASTERIES OF METEORA.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE GREEK ASPECTS OF MACEDONIA.

I HAVE purposely postponed mention of the convents of Meteora, in the heart of Thessaly, above Trikkala, which were till lately under Turkish rule, in order to treat of them along with the far more important but very similar convents on Mount Athos, which are essentially Greek, and with the Christian remains in Salonica, once hallowed by the preaching and by the epistles of the Apostle Paul. The bulk of the seaboard population all the way from Olympus to Philippi is Greek in blood, in language, and in religion. Salonica, the old Thessalonica, lying between Philippi on the east and Berœa on the west, has ever since St. Paul's day been a great centre of Christianity, and even now all the principal mosques are hardly disguised Byzantine churches. The old Macedonian kings, when they determined to leave their splendid old capital—I mean splendid in site—and come down



near the sea or a navigable river to the commonplace Pella, also encouraged Greek speech and manners, by way of civilising their semi-barbarous Macedonian yeomen and feudal chiefs. Thus the language and habits of that coast are thoroughly Greek, though groaning under the injustice and the incompetence of Turkish pashas. There is indeed no part of Greece proper where the splendours of early Byzantine church architecture, and the strange spiritual life of the Greek Church, can be studied so well as at Salonica and on Mount Athos. Nor did the great apostle leave his impress so strongly even in Corinth as on this northern side of the Greek world, as his two Epistles to the Thessalonians, his Epistle to the Philippians, and St. Luke's notice of the Berœans, distinctly imply.

The reader should remember that the splendid old kingdom of Macedonia had been deliberately depopulated and ruined by the Romans after their conquest of the last King of Macedon in 167 B.C. Every noble, every official, every person of any consequence, was either killed, sold into slavery, or interned in Italy, where these unhappy exiles disappear for ever from our view. The remaining peasant population was severed into four provinces, between the members of which no intermarriage or holding of common property was allowed. All the cities once famous were depopulated and ruined, almost as much as Corinth was in the year 146 B.C. Nevertheless the trading of Roman capitalists, of Jews settled in the province of Asia, of Greeks whose enterprise managed to earn wealth under hard conditions, caused several of the coast towns to revive, with a new population and broken traditions.

It was in such a population, so like what must have occupied the new Corinth, that the apostle found the most suitable soil for the preaching of his new doctrine. Cities of ancient renown and conservative views, such as Athens, Sparta, Thebes, were far less likely to appreciate such novelties, except as mere novelties, without practical importance. This seems to me the reason why it is in a peculiar class of town, the new trading town of recent origin or of re-foundation under Roman rule, that St. Paul made his chief missionary efforts. The traditions of his work at Salonica still survive, for there is a fine marble pulpit preserved in separate halves, in two separate churches of the town, which is asserted to have been the pulpit he used for his preaching. In the succeeding centuries the importance of Thessalonica as a Christian centre was only inferior to that of Constantinople, and a series of churches, dating from about the fifth to the twelfth centuries, show the wealth and splendour of the city. The remains of Roman gates, and other Roman work, which has been but recently destroyed by modern vandalism, are as nothing compared with the Christian interest of the town. It is surrounded by huge walls reaching up to the great castle which surmounts the natural theatre presented by the city to the traveller approaching from the sea. These gigantic fortifications, which remind one



of the walls round Constantinople, bear at least in one place an inscription mentioning the pope Ormyzdas, and so fixing the date of that portion. The walls which protected the city from the sea have unfortunately been removed in these days of peace, since steam abolished piracy, and replaced by an open quay, more convenient, no doubt, but not half so picturesque.

‘In the churches of Thessalonica,’ says Mr. Bury,<sup>1</sup> ‘we find the new art [the Byzantine as developed from the Roman] in its perfection, especially in its most original and peculiar development, the adorning of the domes with mosaic. The date of many of the churches at Thessalonica is uncertain, and modern specialists are at variance on the subject. In some cases the buildings themselves afford evidence of great antiquity; for example, the atrium (vestibule) in the nave of St. Demetrius once contained a fountain, which points to the custom of ablution, practised by Christians only in the earliest times, and the mosaic pictures in St. George’s Church of saints who lived before the time of Constantine suggest an early period. The theory, too easily adopted by travellers, that many of the churches were built on the sites of heathen temples, has been contradicted and almost disproved by recent research.’ ‘Of the more ancient buildings in Thessalonica the churches of St. Demetrius and St. George are the most remarkable. The church of St. Demetrius is a *basilica* erected in honour of the saint early in the fifth century.’

As the learned author permits divergence of opinion, I will here record my impression that this great church is much later—more like the building of the tenth century than the fifth. However, ‘the columns of the nave, of *verd’ antico* marble, are Ionic, and the carefully executed capitals might be called Corinthian, but for the eagles with which they are adorned. The *dosserets* [or cushions, like a second capital placed over the first] are marked with crosses, sometimes in the middle of foliage. The only decoration of this church consists in coloured marbles, and the effect is more temperate than if it were also embellished with mosaic.’ I will add to this from my own observations (made in April, 1889) that the pillars of the nave were alternated with piers, just like the early Romanesque churches in Germany (such as those of Brunswick or Fulda), and that the apse has four engaged pillars separating the windows. As is usual in this school, Roman materials are used up with great skill. There is very good marble-inlaying on the round arches, and above them, in the nave. The interior has one hundred and sixty-five pillars in all, but, alas, the old marble is washed with pink, and the *dosserets* with green.

‘The ancient church of St. George is a huge circular dome in appearance, and may have been erected in the early part of the fourth century.’ ‘The entire decoration consists of mosaics, and the eight pictures of the dome are perhaps the finest work of the kind extant.’ I might call

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Later Roman Empire* (Macmillan, 1889), vol. ii., p. 47. The chapter in question is by Mrs. Bury.

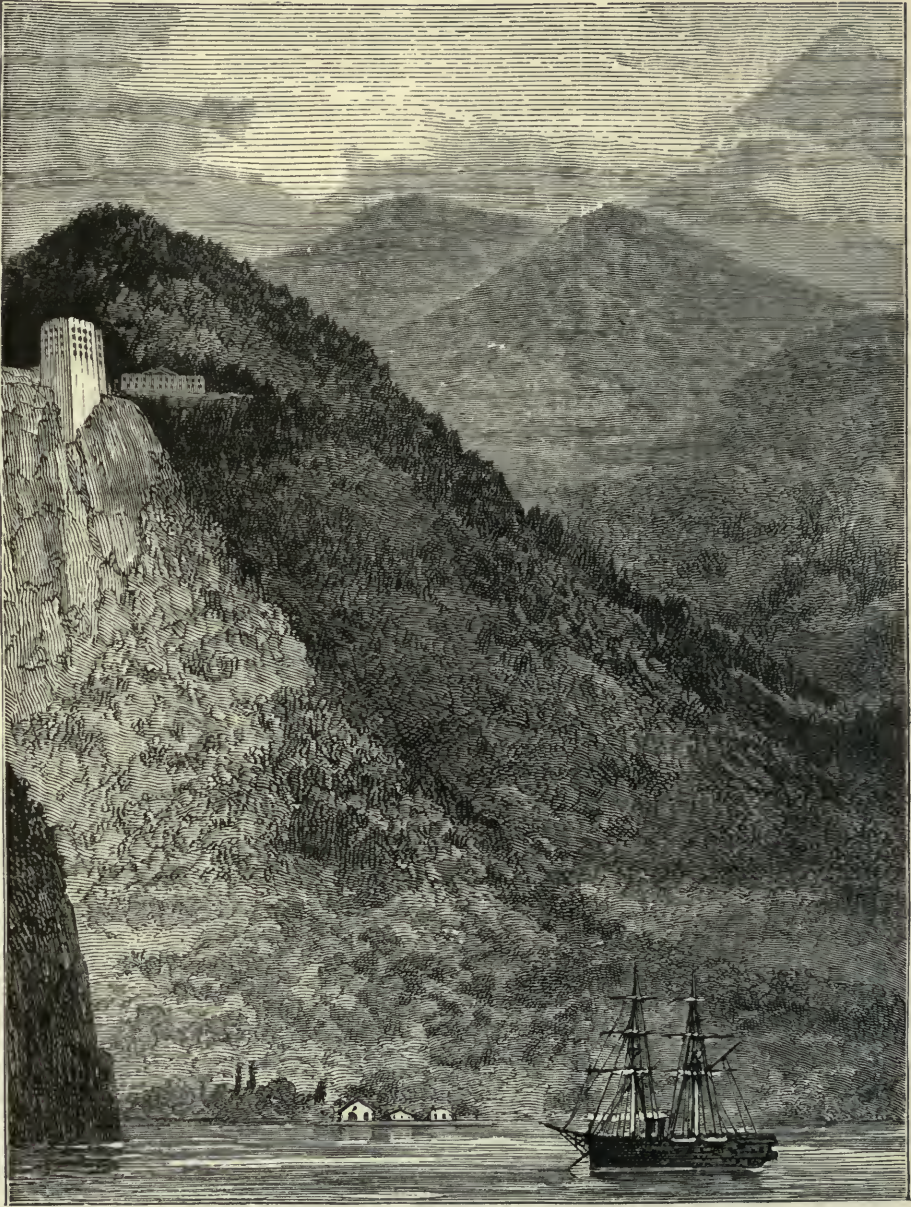
it a sort of Pantheon, like that at Rome. There are architectural designs as well as figures, the colours employed being dull blue, green, gold, and brown, an occasional peacock in mosaic, and then a white figure of a priest. Here and there vulgar modern painting replaces the fallen mosaic. When I was there the Turks were repairing (?) the dome, and many pieces of this priceless mosaic had fallen upon the floor, from which I brought a piece to the Art Museum in Dublin, to show the method of its construction. There are four deep niches in the enormous wall, apparently built to resist even earthquakes, of which the arched roofs are decorated with birds, flowers, and diaper pattern in lovely dull-toned mosaic.

I cannot delay to describe the Church of St. Sophia, an accurate copy on a smaller scale of its great namesake in Constantinople, or the Mosque of Cold Waters, a brick church with storks building on its cupola, while the interior was crowded with horribly filthy Bulgarian refugees.

Let us escape from this marvellous city, whose empty and deserted churches show no care for religion either in the Turks, who now own them, or in the Greeks, who are permitted on certain feasts to assemble in the basilica. All are in shameful neglect and decay. Let us rather escape, and conclude our survey of Greek land and people by a short visit to its great northern monasteries, the vast assemblage of buildings and men gathered upon the Holy Mountain of Athos, which stands up 7000 feet from the sea—the noblest promontory, by far, in all Europe. If ever Nature could suggest sublime thoughts to man, it is in this enchanting place. And what volumes of history are suggested by the very prospect from its summit! As you stand on the pale blue cone, with its seams of snow in every crevice, the eye wanders, starting from the giant Olympus, with its ancient legends of the now expatriated gods, into the wild regions of Macedonia, the cradle of that strong race which once conquered the whole Eastern world. The Gulf of Salonica is hidden by the two sister promontories of Athos, or rather by the central one, for the flat and fertile Pallene, once the territory of Olynthus, lies behind the rugged and wooded hills of Sithonia, which, rising above its western sister, forms a sort of gradation of land between the low ground and the majestic Acte. Due north lies Mount Pangæus, from which Philip drew that gold which bought his way into many a fortress, and in which he coined those noble medals which are so dear, in more senses than one, to the collector. And far behind Pangæus you see the snowy Rhodope, about which cling the legends of Orpheus and his bloody fate, so exquisitely told in Vergil's famous episode. A little more to the north-east the Island of Thasos looks like a promontory from the coast, that lofty island which Herodotus saw all turned inside out, as he says, by the Phœnicians of ancient days, in their search for precious metals. The eye wanders towards the site of Philippi, not distinguishable from the rest of the lower coast, and is caught by the romantic forms of the majestic



Samothrace, the home of art and of mystery, whose occult gods have perplexed the modern scholar, as they amazed the ancient worshipper. The outlines of Samothrace are far the most picturesque of all the islands visible,



MOUNT ATHOS.

as its history is the most peculiar; and thus the tamer, flatter Lemnos, to the south-east, at first disappoints the student who has it bound up in his mind with the sufferings and victory of Philoctetes, glorified by Sophocles in his play, and by its historical connection with Athens, whose private



property it was for many generations. There is even the classical phrase parallel to the modern *Levantine*. *To have sailed to Lemnos* was said of an Athenian who 'was wanted,' and was not forthcoming on the day of trial.

And yet to Athos this Lemnos stands in a peculiar relation of contrast. This was the island which Greek imagination fabled the scene of that fantastic experiment—a commonwealth of women, from which every male had been extirpated. For the opposite experiment has been tried, and with much greater success, on the very promontory which we now occupy. It is now six or seven hundred years since any woman has been allowed to profane the Holy Mountain. The monks and their servants are recruited by importation of boys and men from the mainland, and for centuries an armed watch guarding at the very site of Xerxes' canal kept off not only every woman, but every cow, she-goat, hen—in fact, everything female which could not take wings and fly on to the sacred mountain.

The result is a society without parallel in the civilised world. Many thousands of monks and their servants, living in twenty monasteries, most of them well endowed with lands, which they either cultivate on the promontory, or let to tenants through Macedonia, here practise asceticism of a sort, and piety of a sort quite foreign to all Western conceptions. The convents of Meteora in Thessaly, perched on the summit of lofty rocks, which rise each in curious isolation from the valley above Trikkala, are equally secure from the female sex. For no one can reach them unless he climb some hundreds of feet up ladders hanging loose on the rocks, till he reaches a door at the dizzy height, which the monks open for him. Or else he must trust himself to a net let down from the upper air, in which he swings and turns while a capstan above winds the frayed and time-worn cable, and he is at last stranded like a fish in the sacred eyrie aloft. But these convents of Meteora are so decayed as to be hardly worth the horrible sensations



MONASTERY OF HOLY TRINITY, TRIKKALA.



suffered in the upward journey. All their fine MSS., about which Curzon writes so much in his *Monasteries of the Levant*, are either sold or are at Athens, where I examined many of them in the University Library.

Athos, on the contrary, has withstood the stress of time wonderfully. Some indeed of the estates of the monks in Moldavia and Bulgaria have been confiscated, but still most of the convents seem rich enough for the wants of the monks, including occasional, but most generous hospitality to visitors introduced to them; and if it were not for the innovations of the two Russian monasteries, which are propaganda of politics, and endeavour to introduce Russian ideas by vulgar ostentation and an affectation of modern enlightenment, the Holy Mountain is well-nigh as it has been for many centuries. New galleries of wood are added along the battlements of the walls for guest rooms, or for passages along the cells; some applications of horrible sky-blue or red paint disfigure the sober tones of these mediæval fortresses, but in other respects the strictest conservatism prevails. They still call to prayer during the night by sounding a wooden board called *semantron*, though many of them have bells, and for special services they use a bronze plate made in imitation of the original wood. They no longer copy MSS., which they seem to have done very generally up to the fifteenth century, but as they were recopying the same books—lessons from the Gospels, and Homilies, there was no possible use in continuing the practice. Not one in five hundred of them knows anything about MSS. and their value. Even the precious *Kimelia* (κειμήλια), with which old Byzantine empresses or princes have enriched them, have no value in their eyes in comparison with the sacred relics, cased in gaudy envelopes of silver or gilding, which they bring out in their vestments, and with great reverence, and place on a holy table in their churches for the faithful to revere. Their religion is measured by the orthodoxy of their opinions—there is no inducement to variance or controversy—and the length of their constant services. In such seasons as Passion Week, these services last through most of the day and night. I visited one which lasted from seven in the evening till nine in the morning—fourteen hours!—on the eve of Palm Sunday. And though some of the congregation came and went, the great body remained the same through the whole dreary night. They were singing psalms and reading lessons in turn, and in various parts of their church. Whosoever wishes full and sympathetic information on this curious phase of religion will find it in a very remarkable book, Mr. Athelstane Riley's *Athos and its Monks*, which is well worth reading. But even the clever photographs which he took can give the reader little idea of the superb beauty of the scenery and the matchless picturesqueness of the monasteries, especially on the western side of the mount, which stand like great feudal fortresses upon high and almost inaccessible rocks, framed in a background of cliff and forest and rushing water. The vegetation of the promontory is not only

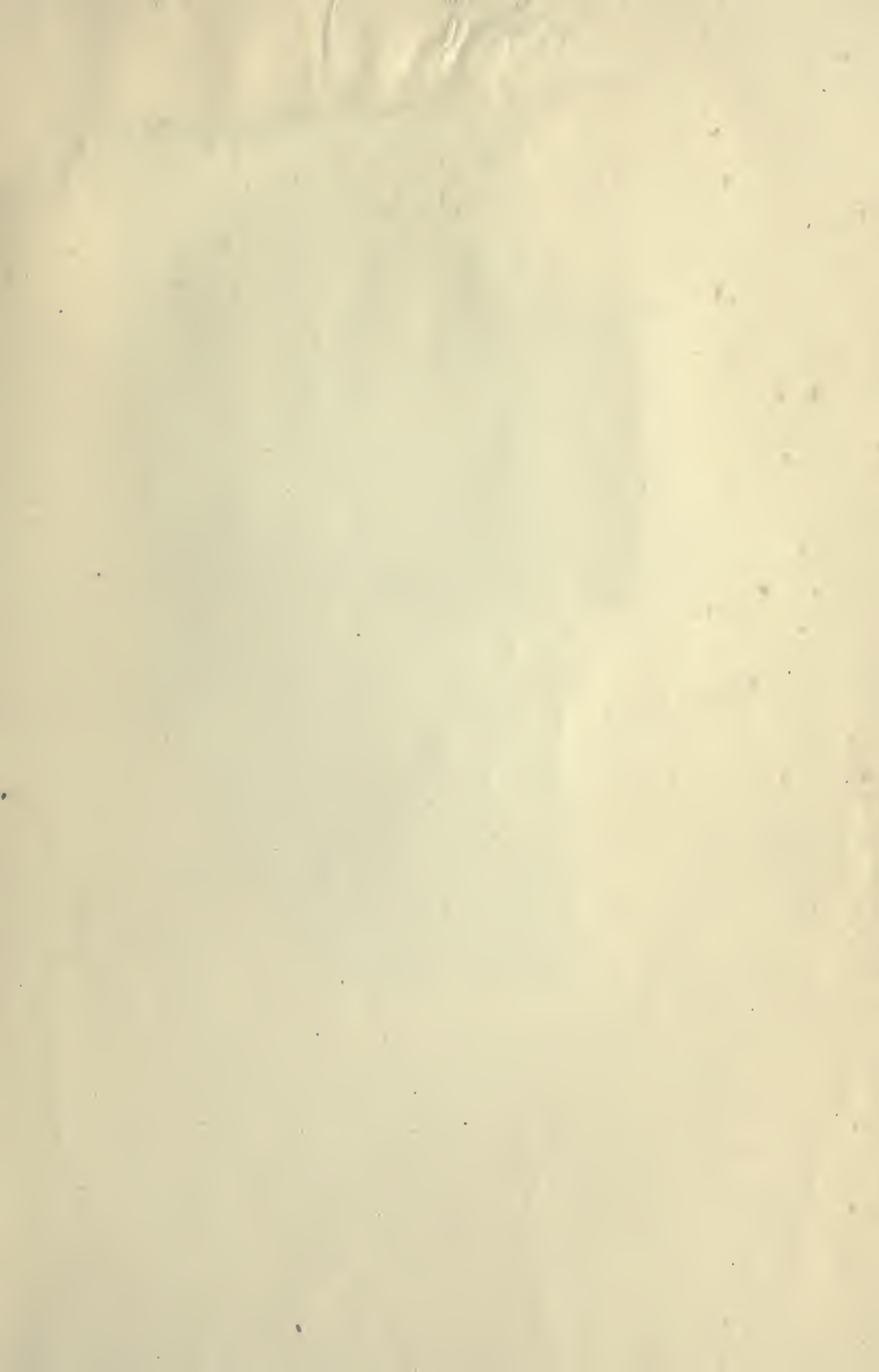
rich, but wonderfully various, owing to the contrasts of aspect and altitude, which produce a climate changing from winter to spring, from spring to summer, in a morning's ride.

And it is a very fit adieu to make to Greece, to visit last of all this most beautiful of all Greek lands, the home of its most rigid devoutness, of its most ascetic religionism, where the traveller can not only wonder at the Providence which has made all things beautiful in their kind, but also the strange devices of men to serve Him, not by enjoying, with thankful and reasonable devotion, the good things of life which He has given them with large hand, but by reversing His laws, and making the practice of religion a thing of fasting, of abstinence, of ritual, and of mental stagnation.



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